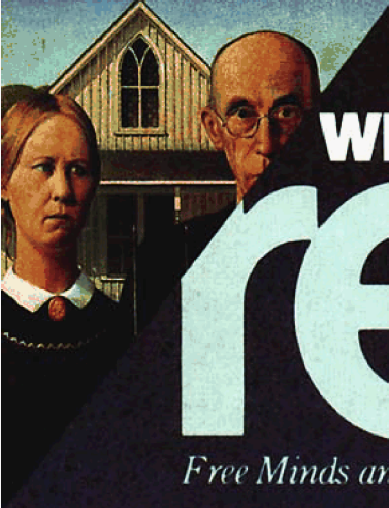

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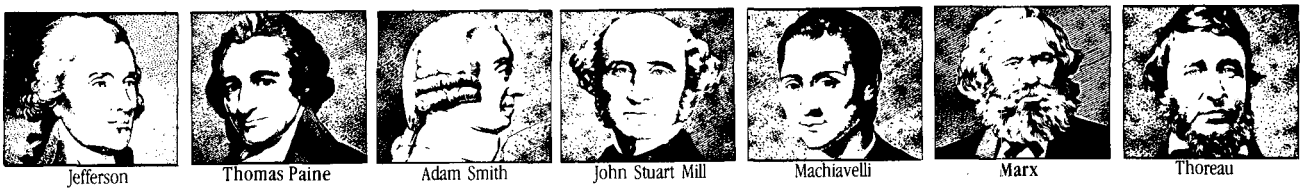

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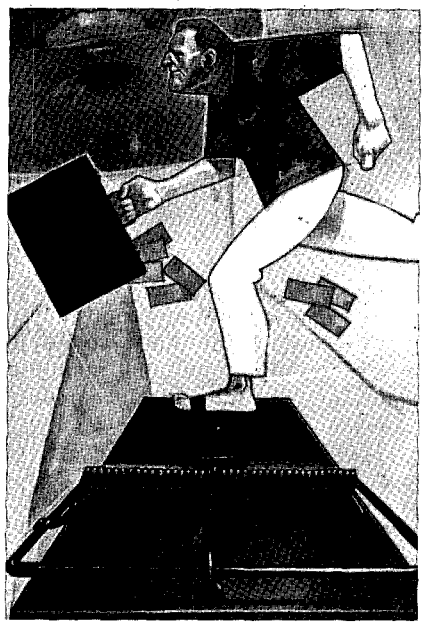

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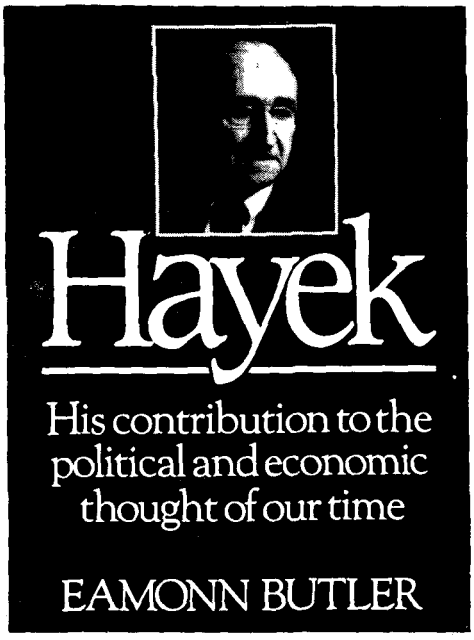

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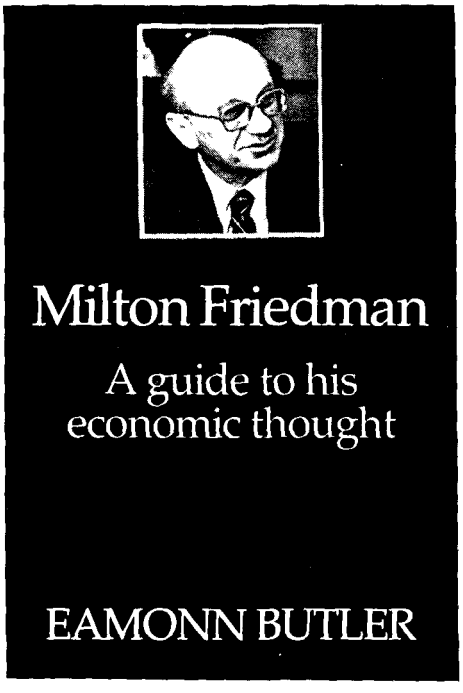

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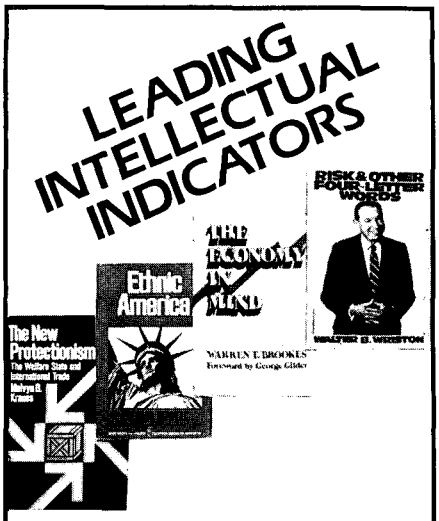

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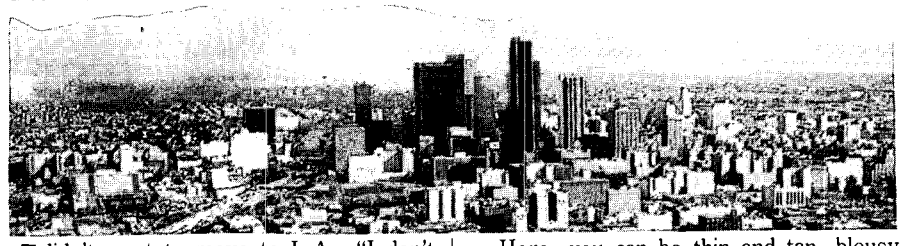
L. A. Dreamin'



I didn't want to move to L.A. "I don't want to live anywhere where you have to be thin and tan," I told my husband when he turned up two job offers in Los Angeles.

L.A., they say in the East, is decadent. It is full of smog, traffic jams, cocaine-snorting movie stars, teenage girls with middle-aged lovers, crazy cultists, plastic surgeons, mass murderers, and every other kind of offense to sensible people's sensibilities. They tilted the country and everything loose rolled to California. And, my friends told me, in L.A. *there are no bookstores.*

But here I am, still neither thin nor tan nor decadent. Still buying books faster than I can read or shelve them. And I love L.A.

It helped, of course, that my favorite magazine happened to move here, too. But REASON isn't what made this southerner-turned-Yankee into a Californian. Los Angeles, you see, is the freest place I've ever been. Which is, no doubt, why it gets such bad press.

My previous city, where I never really felt at home, was built by Puritans and shows it. Rigid development codes deny Boston residents such luxuries as spacious, affordable apartments. (The mayor wants to cure the housing shortage with rent control and condo-conversion laws.) The sidewalks are old-fashioned brick—to which I owe six stitches and a scar above my eyebrow. Everything looks old and usually is.

The narrow, twisted streets have never approved of the automobile, and drivers are intent on waging the war of all against all. The winters are long, nasty, and dispiriting; night falls at three in the afternoon.

In that Athens of America, the intellectual climate is as intolerant as the winter winds. Sure, the bookstores are absolutely incredible. But to think other than politically correct, antimaterialistic, properly left-wing thoughts is to declare yourself a freethinker in Puritan New England.

No wonder Los Angeles seems decadent. It has sunshine. Wide streets, even freeways. Beaches—with real sand and real waves. A Museum of Neon Art. Aerodynamic, 1950s car washes that look ready to take off. Porsches everywhere. Storefront after storefront. Ads for doctors to fix fat thighs, impotent guys, near-sighted eyes.

Here, you can be thin and tan, blousy and bohemian, or intense and intellectual. You can be anything you damned well please, and nobody will bother you. L.A. is America's promised land, luring dreamers from every state and every continent.

In this city of free choice, people often choose dreams planners wouldn't approve. They tear down little houses to make room for apartment buildings. They brave the border patrol to work in "sweatshops." And they drive cars.

The automobile brings freedom that only someone who has depended on subways and buses can really appreciate. The planners determined to stick L.A. with a "Metro-rail" have never endured the Boston T.

What is more telling than the fact that Angelenos love their cars is how they choose to decorate them. Vanity plates—HRDLIFE, NTICEME, REDY4LUV. Little yellow signs announcing babies on board, mothers-in-law in trunk, and so on. It is all so exuberant, so innocent, so personal. Even bumper stickers, the staple of the Boston Volvo crowd, tend toward the apolitical. "Born to Shop" beats "Split Wood Not Atoms" at least 100-to-1.

And then there are the fish. Every fifth car in Los Angeles seems to sport the outline of a fish. It is an ancient Christian symbol, reborn among L.A.'s many evangelical believers.

I had not expected Los Angeles, the reputed capital of sin and decadence, to be such a religious place. The L.A. *Times* seems to discover a new religion every week, many homegrown, California-style. But it all makes sense, from the golden angel Moroni soaring above the West L.A. skyline to the tiny synagogue wedged between a drug clinic and an apartment building on Venice beach to the insurance-office-like Scientologist center.

In a culture where people feel free to realize their own dreams and create their own characters, many will choose the traditional ways. Others will reject them, still others transform them. But these are positive choices, not merely the residue of personal history or social pressure. Los Angeles lets you choose your own life. If that's decadent, count me in.

—Virginia I. Postrel

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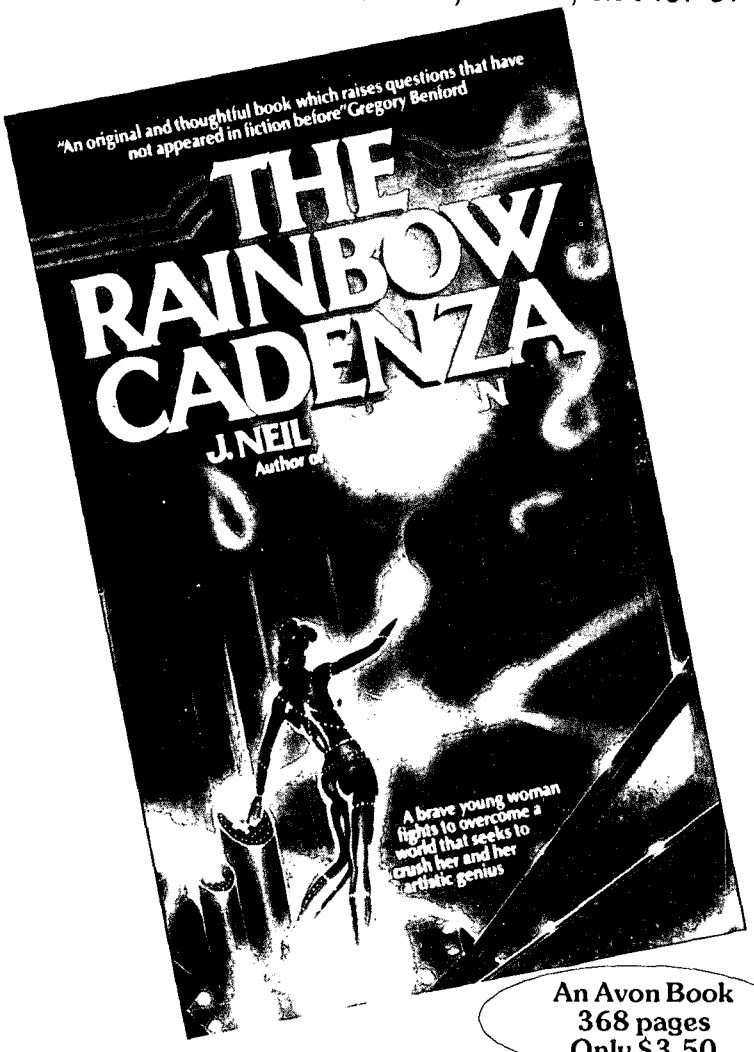
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letters

Draft Dodging Is Defenseless

"Duty, Honor, Country—But No Draft" (Oct.) is pure drivel. What could the author, who evaded the draft, possibly know about duty, honor, and country?

He cites Daniel Webster to imply that the draft may be unconstitutional. But the Constitution has always contained ample authority for such. It also shows that compulsory military service and individual liberty are not contradictory ideas but form two parts of one social contract.

History shows that almost all societies have required military service of adult males. This seems to be a natural law older than mankind. Animals, including the higher primates, exhibit behavior consistent with the principle that all able-bodied males *must* give their support when the group is engaged in violence. Failure to do so is considered disgraceful and grounds for expulsion, even among a troop of baboons.

Todd, having refused to serve his country, now asks that his son be excused from future national service. He suggests that mercenaries be hired to relieve the lad of any need to learn how to defend himself or his country.

This "logic of the heart" is more lunatic than libertarian. Dereliction of duty promotes injustice, not personal freedom.

Hugh A. McDonald
Kearny, NJ

Let's Buy Our Defense with Votes

Since subscribing to REASON a couple of years ago, I have come to expect articles which are logical, freedom-oriented, and unemotional. Todd's article fails to meet these criteria.

His question, though, is a good one. What can we pay a volunteer soldier for putting his body "between our loved homes and the war's desolation"? No money can really pay for that. We need a higher coinage.

National defense is one of the few government functions which cannot be privatized. How can free loading be prevented or minimized?

I suggest that people concerned with this problem, Greg Todd among them, buy a copy of *Starship Troopers* by Robert A. Heinlein. In it, Heinlein concludes that the only payment important enough for a volunteer soldier is the right to vote. His future society is run only by veterans. To vote or run for any elective office, you must have volunteered and successfully completed a tour of military duty. Anyone who volunteers must be taken and given some sort of duty. Getting out of an enlistment is easy, but if you drop out, you can't get back in.

When I read this novel, I was struck by the pure libertarian beauty of the idea. I have never been in the military, but if this system were to be instituted, I would go, old age and high blood pressure notwithstanding.

J. Thomas Baylor
San Diego, CA

Rent Control Does Help Somebody

The other beneficiaries of rent control ("Berkeley's Radical Slumlords," Oct.), other than middle-class people who spend their savings from such controls on gourmet food and stereos, are the retailers who sell gourmet food and stereos and the landlords who rent uncontrolled nonresidential buildings to those retailers.

Great article in a great issue!

Doug Thorburn
Van Nuys, CA

Shooting Down Rent Control

Jeff Riggenbach quotes Assar Lindbeck as saying saying that "next to bombing, rent control seems in many cases to be the most efficient technique so far known for destroying cities." It reminded me of a conversation

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letters

I had with a Palestinian student from Beirut. Rent control there, especially in the commercial districts, had effectively transferred ownership to the tenants. He claimed that it was not unheard of for a landlord to pay the artillery units of one faction or another to train their guns on the landlord's own property. In this way he could at least regain ownership of the land. Perhaps Lindbeck should rethink his ranking of city-destroying mechanisms.

David Kreutzer
Harrisonburg, VA

Fundamentalists Need Schooling in Education

In "A Textbook Case of Coercion" (Editorial, Oct.), Virginia Postrel makes some valid points about taxation and conformity in the public schools. Unfortunately she seems to blur the distinction between beliefs and facts. Fundamentalists may choose to believe in gods, ghosts, goblins, or whatever they like. That is their right, but it doesn't make the belief itself right.

What we're trying to do in schools is teach children facts and how (not what) to think. It is not the purpose of a school to teach children whatever parents think. The result of that reasoning is columnist Cal Thomas's recent claim on the television show *Crossfire* that if a majority of parents think the earth is flat, that's what the schools should teach. Society should not control a child's mind, but neither should parents.

Fundamentalism, "creation science" (one of the most oxymoronic phrases ever coined), and flat-earthism have nothing to do with education. They are an indoctrination in ignorance which has no place in public schools or any school worthy of the name.

Dennis McManus
Attleboro, MA

The State of Education

I wish to amplify a vital issue that Virginia Postrel only hinted at. Ms. Postrel concludes, somewhat broadly, that the lawsuit "may mark the beginning of the end of the myth of public education." I certainly hope so. Watching this trial unfold in a nearby courtroom has convinced me that public education is but one among many alternatives.

Things have changed radically since public school systems were established, and so, therefore, must our thinking about education. Education is a service, and I'd be surprised if the state were the most efficient provider of that service. Releasing taxpayers from the burden of supporting public education is just the first step toward less-intrusive state government and more freedom for individual families—yes, even Mrs. Frost's.

Glen Feighery
Kingsport, TN

Equal Time for "The Equalizer"

James Robbins completely misreads *The Equalizer* in his letter (Aug.-Sept.). The episode he cites deals with terror tactics, not profits. No libertarian would countenance arson, threats on life, or blackmail—which, to my mind, is nothing more than psychological coercion—for any motive.

Most episodes in this show weigh heavily against the state. Recall that it is a *government* agency McCall left, one that quite regularly invades his purview and that of his clients. Add to that fact the next: McCall's work is private, as much *his* as anyone's profession. Therefore, he may charge as much as he wishes for his services. Certain references in more than one episode imply that McCall is amply compensated. The comfortable lifestyle he lives is mute evidence of that fact.

The Equalizer demands one's full concentration, week by week, to receive its full impact. Every detail must be arranged and placed just so to solve the puzzle that is Robert McCall. It is no accident that one of the finest actors currently working portrays that role.

Far from being "an Ellsworth Toohey with spunk," McCall most reminds me of one of Ayn Rand's compelling characters from *Atlas Shrugged*, Ragnar Danneskjold. McCall, like Danneskjold, is a man willing to fight for justice. Unless he fights, he considers *himself* part and parcel of the evil he despises.

D. J. Baker
Cincinnati, OH

I Didn't Beat 'Em—or Join 'Em

I would like to clarify a few points in Andy Cline's article about me ("Meet Laird Wilcox," July).

First of all, I've never been a member of the Communist Party, the Ku Klux Klan, or any "neo-Nazi" organization. For my purposes, which were to get to know these people and understand their motives, it was not necessary to join their groups. We just hung around together, talked over dinner or coffee, and so on. Where possible I leveled with them about my interests. Otherwise I just went along with their script and let them form their own conclusions about me.

Also, I didn't become a right-winger after I dropped out of the radical student movement in 1966. I simply stopped being an automatic leftist ideologue, which can make one look and feel like a right-winger in the climate that prevailed then. Some of my views have changed over the years, but the process has been evolutionary and not the product of any conversion. I'm quite liberal on many issues, such as criminal justice, civil liberties, and unions; and conservative on others, such as national defense, economics, and social policy. I see myself as an anti-ideological iconoclast and a freethinker.

My experiences with the radical left of the '60s included witnessing their fanatical hatred toward whatever or whomever they perceived as right-wing. My curiosity compelled me to find out what these horrible right-wingers were really like. Some of them were just as nutty as the radicals, but most were normal, concerned people who, in retrospect, had a clearer view on many of the issues than their detractors. More importantly, they were human beings, which leftists sought to deny.

The "threat" from obvious political extremists in the United States is very small. Few people listen to the shrieking Klansman, the drooling leftist goon, or the jackbooted Jewish Defense League thug. Much more dangerous are the authoritarians of the mainstream left and right, whose designs on our civil liberties are much more acceptable to a public increasingly conditioned to value security over freedom. Censorship, "anti-hate" legislation, abuse by police agencies and the IRS, victimless crimes, harassment of political dissidents, and the attack on individual rights by sacred-cow special-interest groups are the real threat today—much more than any screwball exhibitionists.

Laird Wilcox
Kansas City, MO

We have received an outpouring of letters in response to Henry Mark Holzer's Viewpoint in the October issue ("The Sodomy Solution: Repeal, Not Appeal"). Watch for them in an expanded Letters department in the January issues.—Eds.

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R – 46

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Join the Army, Be a Narc

Bill Kauffman

The government's war on drugs is reaching a fittingly obscene climax. Tots betray their parents to state authorities and are rewarded for their treachery with lucrative movie offers. The first presidential candidate of what promises to be a dreary 1988 lot, Delaware's Pete du Pont, threatens mandatory dope tests for public-school students. Otherwise sensible people are calling for drug traffickers to be put to death. (Even the Soviet Union treats its black-market capitalists better than that.)

Most ominous, though, is that the metaphorical war on drugs has been literalized. Politicians who conjure up the imagery of battle to emphasize the ardor of their cocaine-hating no longer need to feel like literary prigs; this is no wimpy Carteresque "moral equivalent of war"—it's the real thing, with soldiers and helicopters and some day, inevitably, blood.

Enlisting the armed forces in the war on drugs was, one supposes, inevitable. Militarism is the great public-works project of our day, employing well over 4 million Americans. Liberals are enamored of the government-as-employer aspect of it, while conservatives bask in the radiant glory a powerful army casts upon the nation-state. But a military really ain't much fun unless you can use it. Florida congressman Clay Shaw (R) was at least honest when, apropos the anti-drug campaign, he asked: "Why have all of those men and women and machinery and equipment, airplanes, ships, all of that talent, all of that manpower? Why keep it bottled up and suppressed and not use it?"

Well, now we are using it. War is declared, and battle come down, and the site of our first major campaign in the literal war on drugs is Bolivia. The president of that desperately poor South American land, Victor Paz Estenssoro, was made to understand by his sugar daddies in Washington that the price of continued foreign aid was the surrender of national sovereignty. Paz's government was unwilling to risk losing its $50-million annual subsidy from Uncle Sam; moreover, Bolivian drug merchants were gaining political clout throughout the country. So the hemisphere's superpower was invited in.

Six Army Black Hawk helicopters and about 160 troops invaded Bolivia in July, ostensibly for a 60-day operation (which has been, predictably, extended—"indefinitely"). Their mission: help Bolivia's notorious anti-drug squad, the Leopards, destroy the remote cocaine-processing laboratories.

The element of surprise was lost, thanks to Bolivian newspaper reports of the impending raids. (By contrast, the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Los Angeles Times* knew of the raids beforehand but withheld the information until their Bolivian brethren broke the story. The self-proclaimed independent American press didn't want to "disrupt the raid," says the *Los Angeles Times*'s Jack Nelson. Reed Irvine and other baiters of the "liberal press," take note.)

Despite the advance notice, the raids were reportedly a success. Processing labs accounting for 90 percent of Bolivia's cocaine trade have been destroyed, forcing the coke entrepreneurs to shift operations to neighboring countries or go underground for a while.

But consider, for a moment, the true victims of this raid. Bolivia's 90,000-acre coca crop is the second-largest in the world, behind only Peru's. Its cocaine exports totaled $600 million last year—$100 million more than all legal exports combined. Tens of thousands of peasants earn their daily bread picking coca leaves.

Now there is "virtually no market for their crop," according to the Associated Press. The U.S. government has annihilated the most important industry in South America's poorest country and left a goodly portion of Bolivia's population—perhaps seven percent—without the means to support themselves. These people sure can't feed their kids on Nancy Reagan's anti-drug homilies.

Weep not, however, for Bolivian "leader" Paz. This is a superb deal for the Bolivian government. A troublesome source of domestic political opposition has disappeared. A vital (though untaxed) illegal export may be gone, but Paz will be rewarded for his complaisance. Just days after U.S. military forces invaded, the Bolivian planning minister appeared in Washington, hat in hand, begging for $100 million in economic assistance *in addition* to the $50 million U.S. taxpayers are already sending these mendicants. Just how much of this aid finds its way into the pockets of destitute peasants is a matter left to reader speculation.

Unfortunately, the Bolivian tragedy is but one example of U.S. meddling in the agricultural affairs of her smaller neighbors. A U.S.-backed marijuana-eradication campaign in Jamaica (U.S. aid, $140 million annually) has erased 40 percent of one of that impoverished island's chief cash crops. Again, the victims are poor rural farmers, as well as members of a religious minority, the Rastafarians, who use *ganja* in their rituals.

The U.S. government's new role as world narc is earning us the hatred of Mexicans, as well. In our cover story this issue, Dale Gieringer documents the outrageous abuses of Americans' rights committed by the Drug Enforcement Administration. The DEA is no less assiduous in harassing Mexicans. Its heavy-handed meddling in Mexican police affairs has provoked a new round of anti-Americanism south of the border.

Having deprived Bolivian and Jamaican peasants of their livelihoods and whipped up nationalist resentment in Mexico, the Reagan administration is ready for new triumphs in the war on drugs. Officials are trying to use the promise of increased foreign aid to bribe the governments of Columbia, Ecuador, and Peru into surrendering their sovereignty, just as Paz has given up Bolivia's.

We are already, in Latin America, reaping the bitter fruits of past decades of mili-

tary intervention to further our own ends. To "send in the Marines" all over again is insanely short-sighted.

Of course, the militarists' thirst is never slaked, and a large number of our statesmen are now clamoring to turn the army loose on the *American* drug trade. They hide behind the well-worn national-security fig leaf. Thunders South Carolina's Thomas Hartnett (R) of the drug menace: "This threat to national security [is] worse than any nuclear warfare or any chemical warfare waged on any battlefield." (Remember: men who are capable of saying things like this with a straight face make the laws that *you* have to live under.)

Prodded by Hartnett and legislators of similar stature, the House version of the recently enacted drug law contained an astonishing provision commanding the president to use the armed forces to "substantially halt the unlawful penetration of U.S. borders by aircraft and vessels carrying narcotics within 45 days." This extraordinary proposal—which called for the military to create an Iron Curtain around a free nation—passed the House easily, 237-177.

Cooler heads prevailed—including that of Defense Secretary Weinberger, who called the proposal "absurd." The provision was quietly dropped, but expect it to resurface next year.

Siccing the military on the domestic drug trade is probably not, strictly speakly, illegal. The Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 forbids using the armed forces to execute the law, but exceptions have been made in the past, notably during riots in the 1960s. (More problematic is the legality of the Bolivian raids, which may have violated the War Powers Act of 1973.)

But beyond the legal issues lies a more basic question that the militarists ought to consider. That is, are we still a republic, with a limited government and a civilian-controlled military whose sole purpose is to defend this nation against attack; or are we to become a huge Banana Republic, where a jack-booted military acts to ensure social control at home and hemispheric hegemony abroad?

The grotesqueries described above certainly confirm the worst fears of the Founding Fathers, who, almost to a man, feared that a standing army could become an instrument of tyranny. James Madison spoke for his Constitutional Convention colleagues when he wrote: "Armies in time of peace are allowed on all hands to be an evil."

That is a lesson we have all too easily forgotten. The people of Bolivia are learning it the hard way, and unless the message sinks in soon, so will we.

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About the Author

Psycholinguist Suzette Haden Elgin has presented her innovative self-defense principles in a variety of formats. She has given workshops and seminars all over the U.S., including verbal self-defense sessions for doctors, lawyers, and other professionals. Dr. Elgin has also created a self-defense tape and a training manual for people who teach her self-defense techniques.

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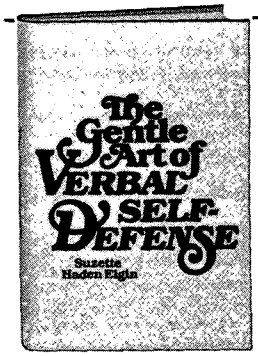

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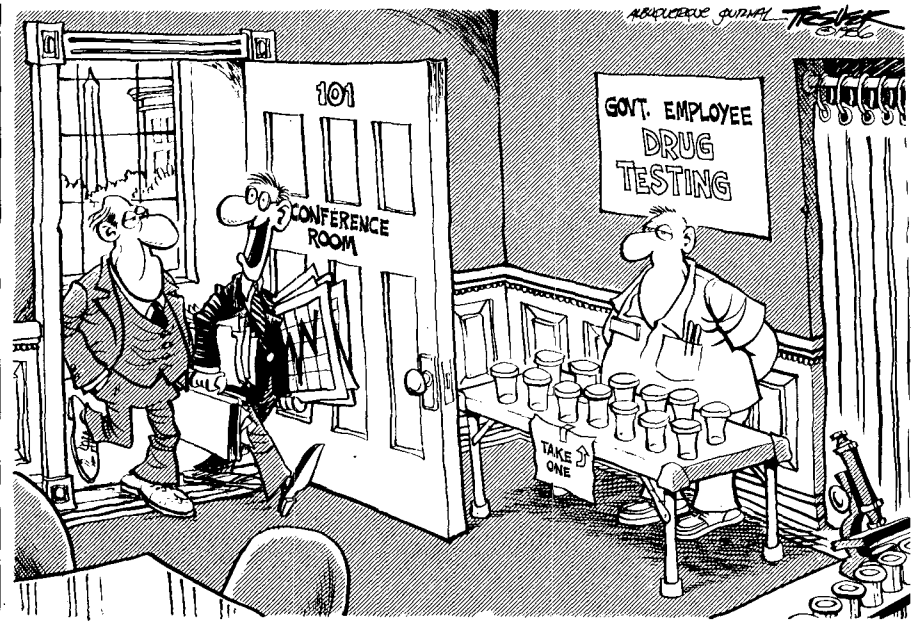
brickbats

Let's put Richard Adams's face on a postage stamp, a commemorative issue honoring economy in government. Adams, a Democrat running for a seat in the Arizona legislature, has cleverly saved postage for years by keeping the envelopes his letters come in, inserting his responses, and writing "Return to sender, please" on the outside. "It saves postage, saves envelopes, which are trees, and saves processing time," says Adams. But finicky postal officials say the practice is illegal. Adams's mailing practice came to light when he returned two completed questionnaires, with some campaign literature thrown in, to the *Arizona Republic* newspaper. Oops...

Who was the Israeli prime minister until November, and who is it now? Who is the leader of the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa? If you know the answers, you're a lot more informed than the candidates running for U.S. Senate in Maryland. During a TV debate, the moderator shocked the politicians with a pop quiz. And they both flunked. Rep. Barbara Mikulski, who asked if the cameras could be turned off before she answered, said *Jonas Savimbi* heads the ANC. Rep. Michael Barnes, who sits on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, wouldn't even venture a guess. The politicians' excuses were more pathetic than their answers. "Some days, you just can't even remember your wife's birthday," said Barnes. In case you're thinking of running for office, the answers are: Shimon Peres until November, when Yitzhak Shamir took over. As for the ANC, either Nelson Mandela or Oliver Tambo is an acceptable answer.

We can all rest easier now that the Government Accounting Office (GAO) has rendered its decision. If you're a federal employee and you use your own pen at work, Uncle Sam will buy you a refill. Although the government buys 32 million retractable black ballpoints each year, not all the 2.8 million federal workers choose to use them. So the Office of Personnel Management sought the GAO's opinion as the government's court of last fiscal resort. In a three-page decision, the GAO ruled that the government can buy refills for employees' private pens, but only if the pen is used solely on government business. And of course, requests for pen refills must be submitted in triplicate and should be typewritten or in ink. A grateful nation breathes a collective sigh of relief.



"'WE NEED YOUR ANALYSIS,' HE SAID! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! HE SENT FOR ME! THE PRESIDENT ACTUALLY CALLED AND SAID, 'WE NEED YOUR ANALYSIS'!"

They don't like rock 'n' roll in Westfield, Indiana. And they're not all that fond of classical, gospel, jazz, or pop either. The town planning commission rejected a music promotion company's proposal to build a $7-million performing arts center. The reason? The facility might attract drug users, cultural dropouts, and devil worshippers. The town's youth think the adults' reaction is naive. "Drugs won't move in just because of a concert," says 19-year-old Kim Loller. "I go to church. But I see nothing wrong with rock music. I don't think the Lord condemns us for listening."

As if you didn't know it, here's *proof* that Washington is the paper-pushing capital of the world. A new study confirms with statistics that much of the paper produced in Washington is just garbage. Environmental analysts studied the city's trash and found that 46 percent of it was paper, compared with a national average of 30 percent. Because of the paper glut, Washingtonians throw away 4.5 pounds of waste a day, a third above the national average. So many reports, memos, letters, and newspapers are being thrown away that the city has had to resort to landfill sights in nearby Virginia to find space to dump it all. You know what they say: "Garbage in, garbage out."

The farm-subsidy program keeps rolling along. Not content with taking tax dollars for *not* growing crops, some farmers are finding curious ways to evade a law that limits them to a maximum of $50,000 in annual income subsidies. Federal audits show that a lawyer in Great Bend, Kansas, is fighting to make three "farmers" eligible for $50,000 each. The "farmers" are two brothers and their sister, ages 10 to 14. And in Arkansas, a farmer was able to triple his payments last year by reorganizing into three separate corporations. The reorganization was approved by the local Agriculture Department board, of which the farmer himself was chairman. Another farmer and his son received $50,000 each in subsidies, even though the son owned no farming equipment and was away from home all year attending college. The federal government says it's only just become aware of the chicanery and has no idea how much it's costing taxpayers. So what else is new?

—Mark Edward Crane

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trends

Deregulation Transports Women to Higher Levels

How do you open up a male-dominated industry to women? The popular solution seems to be to require employers to hire a certain number of women. Alternatively, women can try to force the hand of businesses by bringing costly discrimination suits. But deregulation? Yes, that's right. It may not be the "in" solution yet, but if the transportation industry is any indication, it has a lot of potential.

There seems to be general agreement among those in the know that deregulation has significantly increased employment opportunities for women in the previously male-dominated field of transportation management. (Transportation managers coordinate the transport of raw materials and finished products for shippers and carriers.) According to a recent issue of the newspaper *The Journal of Commerce*, many members of the Women's Traffic Club of New York credit "the unraveling of decades-old statutes that regulated traffic on the nation's highways and the proliferation of truck companies as key reasons for their successful entries" into the field.

Until just six years ago, the Interstate Commerce Commission kept a tight clamp on how many hopeful trucking firms could get into the business. Then Congress passed the Motor Carrier Act of 1980, which, among other things, substantially eased entry regulations. The number of trucking companies has since shot up over 80 percent, from 18,045 in 1980 to 33,283 last year. And *The Journal of Commerce* reported recently that "observers say the rise of women in transportation correlates with the mushrooming in the number of truck carrier firms" since deregulation.

Marie E. Forsythe, sales manager for the international division of Paper Corp. of United States, agrees that deregulation has helped women break into the industry. "The number of women in traffic manager positions was very small but over the last 10 years our numbers have grown enormously," she notes. And Gloria M. Orlando, records manager for Transway International Corp., a transportation company based in White Plains, New York, says that now there are "a lot of women that are being offered manager positions."

The success of women in a formerly male domain shouldn't surprise those familiar with the other benefits of deregulation. Whenever the government prevents people from freely entering an industry, it hurts most those who are already excluded —usually, women and minorities. It should be a sobering thought for those who would now call on government to intervene in the free marketplace in behalf of women.

On Your Mark, Get Set, Launch!

Free enterprise is coming to the final frontier. In the wake of the Challenger disaster, President Reagan announced that NASA will launch only 14 more commercial satellites from the space shuttles before bowing out of the commercial launching business. (The first of those 14 won't be put aloft until shuttle flights resume in early 1988.)

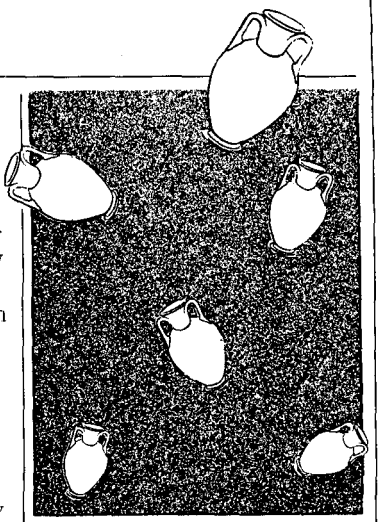
At the same time the president was getting NASA out of the commercial satellite business, he announced his support for the construction of a fourth shuttle, to replace the Challenger. (For a dissenting opinion, see "Scuttle the Shuttle," REASON, June). Even if the new shuttle is operational by 1991, the space agency will be unable to launch nearly 30 commercial satellites for which it has contracted.

Exit NASA, enter private industry. Nearly two years ago, Patrick Cox reported in these pages ("Space Entrepreneurs," Jan. 1985) on the ways NASA's space-transportation monopoly was thwarting the development of a thriving private space industry, primarily through highly subsidized commercial satellite launchings that made private competition infeasible. As long as NASA was in the launch business, said one investment banker, there was the impression that "the elephants are dancing and some mice will be crushed." But as Cox predicted, "The bureaucratic barriers are destined to fall. The question now is how soon." In the immortal words of The Smiths, "how soon" is now.

Several aerospace firms—most notably Martin Marietta and General Dynamics—appear "ready, willing, and able" to take up where NASA left off, asserts Transportation Secretary Elizabeth Dole. Martin Marietta, for example, has received "informal inquiries" from 21 firms about satellite launchings, according to spokesman Jack Boyd. The company has made it known that it will be offering its Titan III launch vehicle to lift commercial satellites.

Most significantly, Martin Marietta has signed a memorandum of understanding granting Federal Express the aerospace firm's first satellite-launch reservation. Boyd told REASON that they're shooting for a Federal Express launch date of 1989.

And why did the government ever think there wouldn't be sufficient interest on the part of the



private sector in providing this service? Rick Endres of Transpace Carriers figures that satellite launching will amount to a $6-billion business over the next six years.

Tom Brosz, editor of *Commercial Space Report* and a stout champion of space entrepreneurs, pronounces himself "delighted" with the new competition for satellite launchings. Brosz points out that this decision helps not only the Martin Mariettas of the world but the smaller, more visionary rocketmen (some of whom were profiled in Cox's article), as well—"smaller entrepreneurs are getting a lot more interest" from potential customers, he declares. Houston-based Space Services Inc. even reports that it is in business with two customers to launch eight satellites on its *Conestoga II*.

As the private-sector space industry grows, satellites won't be the only things blasted into the great unknown. Perhaps the most unusual private space venture is in the planning stage at Celestis of Melbourne, Florida. Celestis is one of Space Services Inc.'s customers, and what it will launch is an orbiting mausoleum, probably "at the end of 1987," according to Space Services spokesman Mark Daniels.

The first space mausoleum—at least two more will follow —will contain the cremated remains of more than 3,000 dead

space buffs. Celestis officials were unavailable to answer questions about the launch, such as how much it will cost to spend the hereafter in geosynchronous orbit or what kind of music will be played over the ship's P.A. system.

Look for more such ventures, practical and bizarre, as private enterprise takes its first steps into space. A new era has arrived.

Is Keynesian Stability So Much Fruit Salad?

Back in the bad old days, the economy was a mess. Panics. Bank crashes. Inflation. Deflation. Lots of ups and downs. Then came the New Deal and the Fed, fiscal policy and monetary policy. Thanks to government intervention inspired by British economist John Maynard Keynes, the economy stabilized. The booms weren't as big, but neither were the busts.

This story, or a somewhat more sophisticated version, has backed up government macroeconomic policy for decades. Economists had the numbers, they thought, to prove it; their data showed that the economy was in fact much more volatile before World War I than after World War II, when the government really cranked up its activist policies.

But the numbers, it seems, weren't as good as everybody thought. A young, MIT-trained economist is making the academic rounds with new research that is giving conventional Keynesians conniption fits. Christina D. Romer of Princeton University argues in three new articles that economists have been relying on

Christina D. Romer: *Giving conventional Keynesians conniption fits*

data that in effect compare prewar apples with postwar oranges.

For example, to measure production, modern data gatherers use industrial output—the end products of manufacturers. But pre-World War I figures instead count intermediate materials, such as pig iron, that manufacturers use to produce those end products. When the economy is good, companies tend to build up their materials inventories; when things sour, they draw them down. Simple enough. But this means that those materials statistics exaggerate the peaks and valleys of the business cycle. Presto! A volatile prewar economy, courtesy of the data.

To get the apples and oranges matched up right, Romer constructed new indices and found that the economy looks basically the same in both periods. If you measure materials, it looks jumpy. If you measure goods, it looks stable. (She found similar results for employment and GNP statistics.) At least on the face of things, government fine-tuning hasn't smoothed out the peaks and valleys. "Without clear evidence of stabilization, we can no longer simply assert that government stabilization policy is obviously effective," Romer

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writes in the prestigious *American Economic Review*..

Romer's work has created a storm of controversy. "Conventional Keynesian macroeconomists desperately want to believe it's wrong," Romer told REASON. So far, however, they've had little success at attacking it. And a similar study of European and Japanese data by Professor Steven Sheffrin of the University of California at Davis, has confirmed Romer's results.

Meanwhile, non-Keynesians have embraced Romer's research. "It substantiates their viewpoint," she said in an interview. Chicago economist Robert Barro has told her that he plans to include her data in future editions of his introductory macro textbook, a leading competitor to such Keynesian tomes as Paul Samuelson's famous text.

She stresses that her work applies to actual government actions, not economic theory, so it doesn't necessarily contradict the basic Keynesian principle that "policy matters." It is possible, she says, that the economy would have been even more volatile without government intervention. Or, she told REASON, "it could mean that policy matters but we just haven't used the right policies," a position advocated for years by Milton Friedman.

Indeed, even as she stands firmly by her results, Romer is loath to throw out Keynes. "I'm incredibly careful, and my training is sort of Keynesian," she said. "In my heart of hearts—that's what I teach my undergraduates."

Coming from a scholar so sympathetic to Keynesian ideas, Romer's evidence is all the more convincing.

Red Dawn or Red Dusk?

Just how widespread is the Soviet Union's influence in the world today? It may not be nearly as far-reaching as many people fear, according to a new report by the Center for Defense

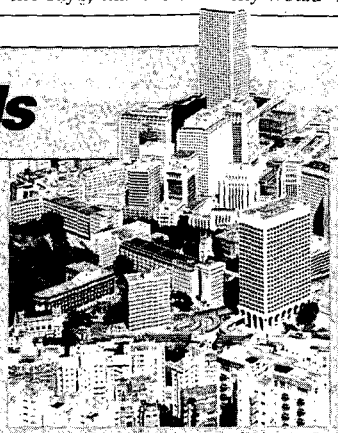
global trends

Indians to Sing Hong Kong Song?

NEW DELHI—India's Andaman Islands, which were freed from the British yoke before the mainland gained its independence in 1947, may soon become India's first free market. The islands are located in the Bay of Bengal, 1,000 kilometers from the nearest point on the Indian mainland.

Nonresident Indians (NRIs), particularly those settled in Hong Kong and the Gulf countries, have long urged the Indian government to convert the Andaman Islands into a "new Hong Kong." Their request has become even more urgent in recent years: Hong Kong faces an uncertain future once it is transferred to Chinese control in 1997, and Indians residing in Gulf countries are suffering as the oil boom has busted.

Slain Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had ordered a top-level examination of this proposal after meeting with several delegations of NRIs, yet nothing ever came of it. But her son, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, has again raised hopes (and eyebrows) by confirming that his government plans to establish a free port on one of the Andaman Islands.



Thriving Hong Kong could be India's model

Gandhi has said: "Such a free port offers one of the most exciting prospects for non-Indian investment and a free economic zone." The delay in creating the zone is only because "we are trying to sort out some constitutional and other problems."

Will Indian industrialists like the idea? Dilip Piramel, chairman of Blow Plast Ltd., told the Delhi press: "It is a very interesting idea and is most welcome....This will help the Andamans to grow rapidly. Hong Kong has been exporting 2-3 times the goods exported by our entire country." (It is interesting to note that the 14,000 NRIs in Hong Kong—out of a total population of 5 million—control more than 10 percent of its $45-billion trade.)

Not only will the free port create job opportunities and earn foreign exchange for India, it will also attract investment from nearby countries such as Malaysia, Burma, Indonesia, and Thailand. If Mr. Gandhi is serious about establishing an Indian Hong Kong, the world may soon see another lesson in laissez faire.

—Probir Kumar Sarkar

Free Enterprise Working in Jamaica, Mon

Sometimes the policies advocated by free-marketeers sound so dull. For instance, Jamaica, under Prime Minister Edward Seaga, has deregulated commerce, reduced taxes, removed import quotas—are you still awake? Yet the results of Jamaica's liberalization are anything but dull. One aspect, in particular, demonstrates vividly the colorful and multifarious benefits of a free economy.

"Higglers" are the poor but industrious international traders, mostly women, who have taken full advantage of the unfettering of Jamaica's economy. Syndicated columnist Georgie Anne Geyer, writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, calls them "Jamaica's amazing, new entrepreneurial village adventuresses, doggedly traveling the Caribbean airlines with shopping bags and suitcases filled with goods."

There are about 13,000 higglers in Jamaica, most of them uneducated rural women. They fly to neighboring countries—the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, Panama—with bags stuffed with Jamaican products, such as thyme and bananas. These they sell or trade, bringing back to Jamaica goods ranging from whiskey to onions. Then they sell these imports in arcades or on the streets.

Higglers, like most entrepreneurs, ask only that the government leave them alone. In the 1970s the Jamaican state under Socialist Prime Minister Michael Manley did just the opposite—it taxed and harassed higglers, even confiscated their goods. Seaga's rule has been kinder; the government has relaxed exchange-rate controls and even granted higglers their own euphemism, "Informal Commercial Importers."

Ironically, Jamaica's enlightened policy comes at a time when many American cities, among them New York and Washington, D.C., are clamping down on street vendors. Cities considering similar restrictions would be wise to listen to Buster Riley, a leader of the Jamaican higglers: "With this trade, people make a better living and have better schools for their kids. They aren't pressing the government to give them these things but are working for them on their own."

Information, a Washington, D.C.-based research organization.

The Center argues that Soviet influence in the world peaked in the late 1950s, when nearly 15 percent of all countries in the world, constituting 31 percent of the world's population (not including the USSR), were "Soviet-influenced," that is, beset by "high levels of Soviet involvement and presence" and "a close and cooperative relationship with the Soviet Union."

Those percentages have declined over the decades. CDI figures that in 1986, just 11 percent of the nations of the world, and 6 percent of the world's non-Soviet population, fall under the Soviet sway.

Why the steep drop? The report maintains: "Soviet inability to hold the allegiance and support of important Third World countries over the long-term has been the major weakness of the Soviet Union in attempting to expand its influence." The outstanding examples of Soviet diplomatic failures in large nonindustrialized nations have been their "losses" of China, Indonesia, India, and Egypt.

Even today, notes CDI, the Soviet Empire is in trouble in the Third World. Outside of Eastern Europe and Mongolia, virtually all Soviet client states are engaged in armed conflict. For instance, "there are guerrilla wars in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Laos, Mozambique, and Syria; border conflicts for Vietnam and South Yemen; Cuba has troops in Angola and Ethiopia; Libya has troops in Chad; Syria has troops in Lebanon." (Readers may disagree with CDI's exclusion of Nicaragua from its list. Nicaragua, "anti-American / pro-Soviet," is labeled "Cuban-influence[d]" but not a "member of the Soviet bloc.")

Significantly, the USSR has not posted a gain in influence since 1979, when Vietnamese puppet Heng Samrin was installed as Cambodia's ruler. East Asia, in fact, has been the sole bright spot for Soviet imperial ambitions in the '80s, as relations with the antidemocratic regimes in Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and North Korea have warmed.

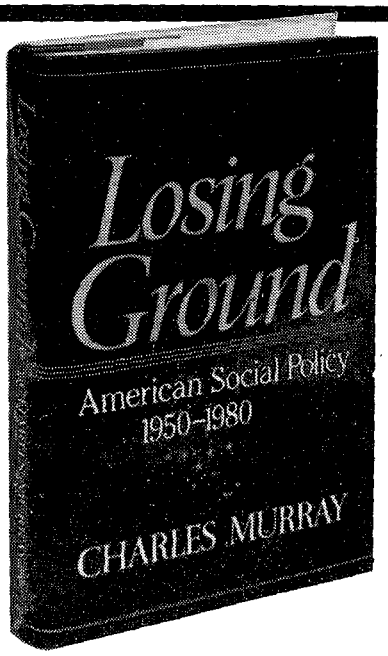
The implications of the decline in Soviet influence are unclear. But the study prompts the proverbial grain of salt when confronted with the claims and prescriptions of those who see the nations of the world drowning in a tide of red.

Milestones

■ *Deregulation raises interest.* Texas lawmakers, faced with unpaid loans to the state's depressed oil industry, have approved legislation allowing out-of-state banks to acquire Texas banks and savings and loans. The measure won the support of two traditional foes of deregulation: small, independent bankers, who hope out-of-state capital will slow the decline of their state's economy, and federal bank regulators, who want to save the government from bail-outs. California, meanwhile, recently passed several bills that will allow interstate mergers of both banks and S&Ls.

■ *Noble cause.* In August, a dozen economists, all Nobel laureates, signed a letter widely distributed to U.S. newspapers urging "the Congress and the President to resist pressures for protectionist pressures and instead to move as far as possible in the direction of reducing the restrictions on international trade."

—Robert W. Poole, Jr., Lucy Braun, Bill Kauffman, and Virginia I. Postrel



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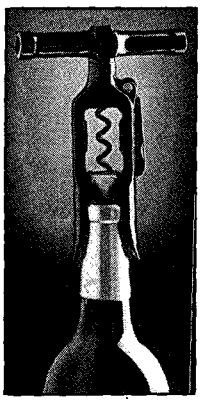

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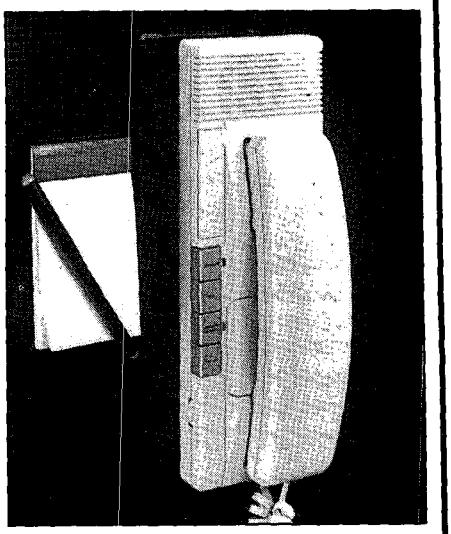

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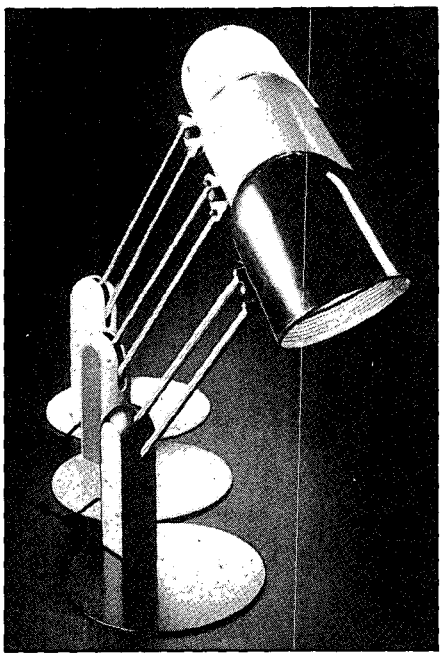

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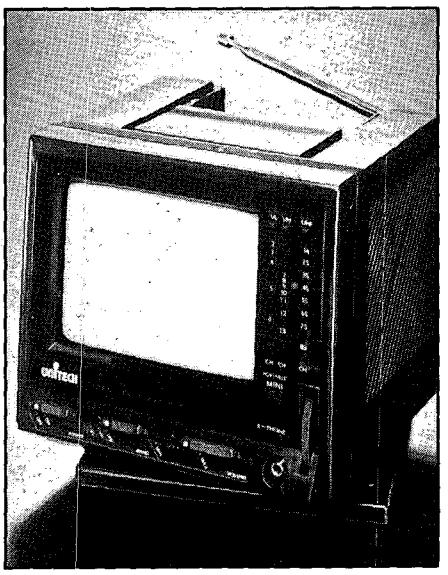

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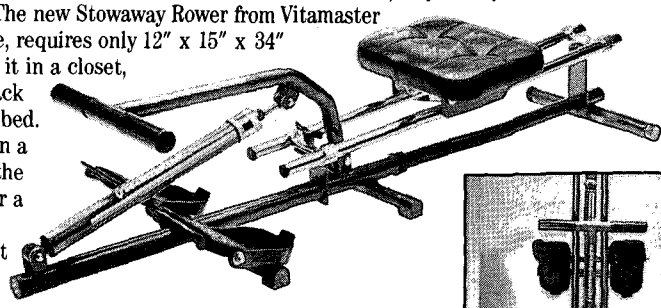

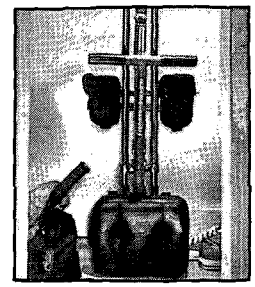

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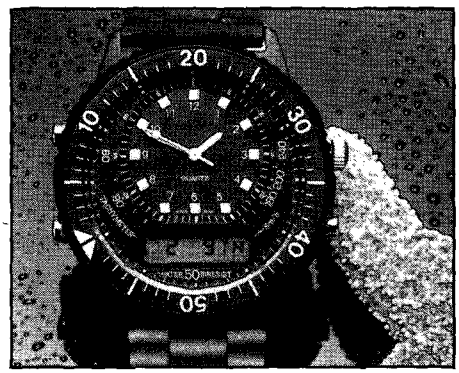

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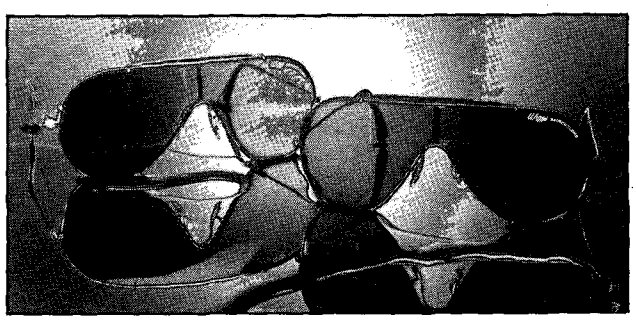
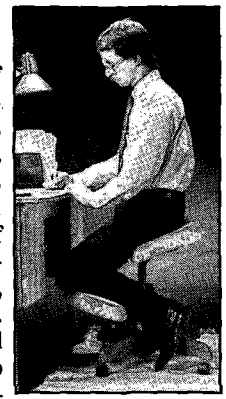


IT SWIVELS!



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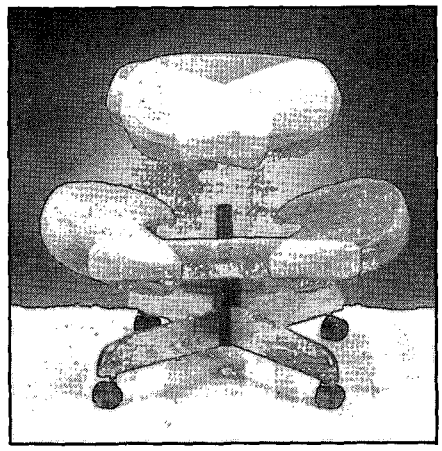

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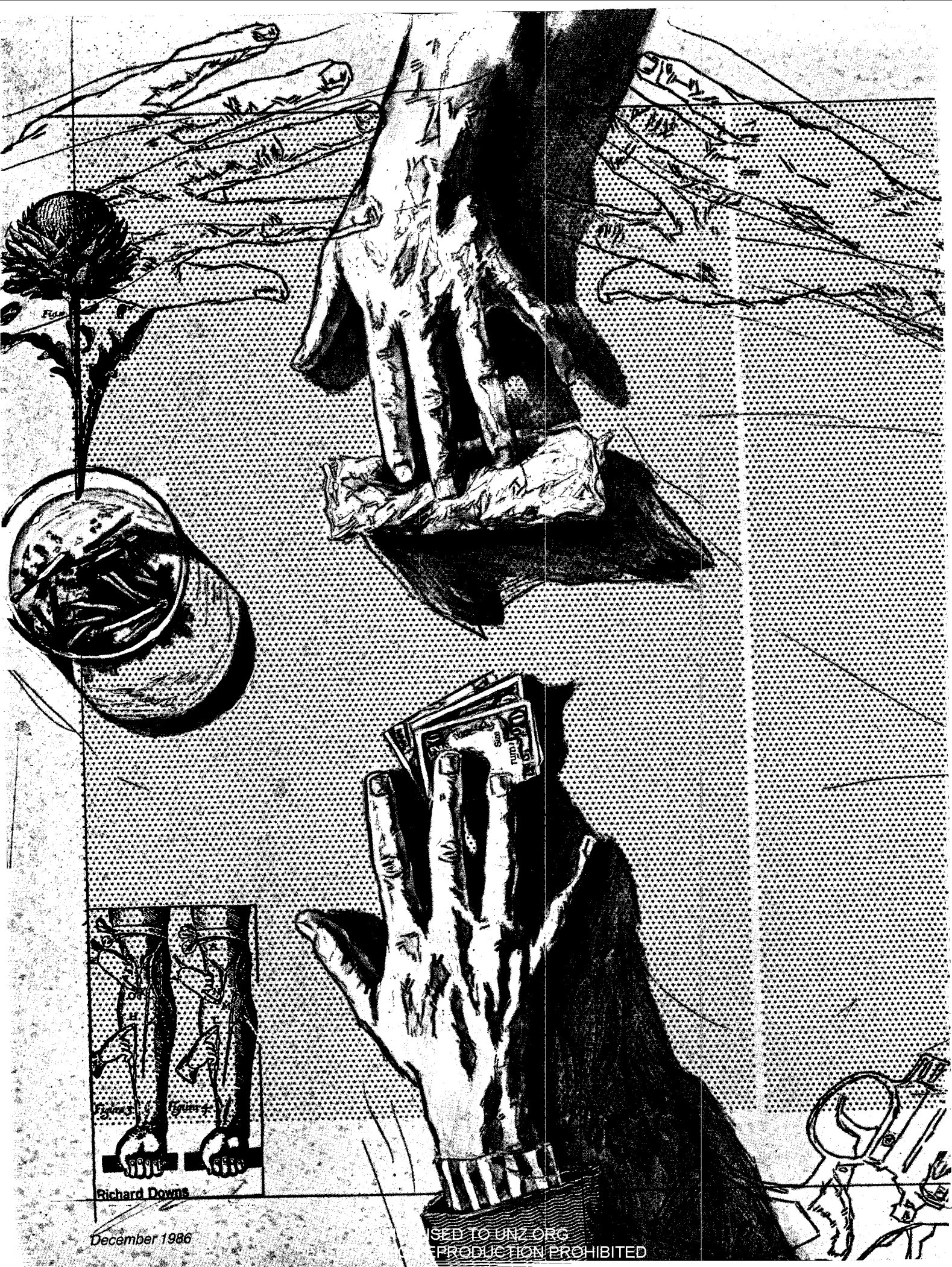

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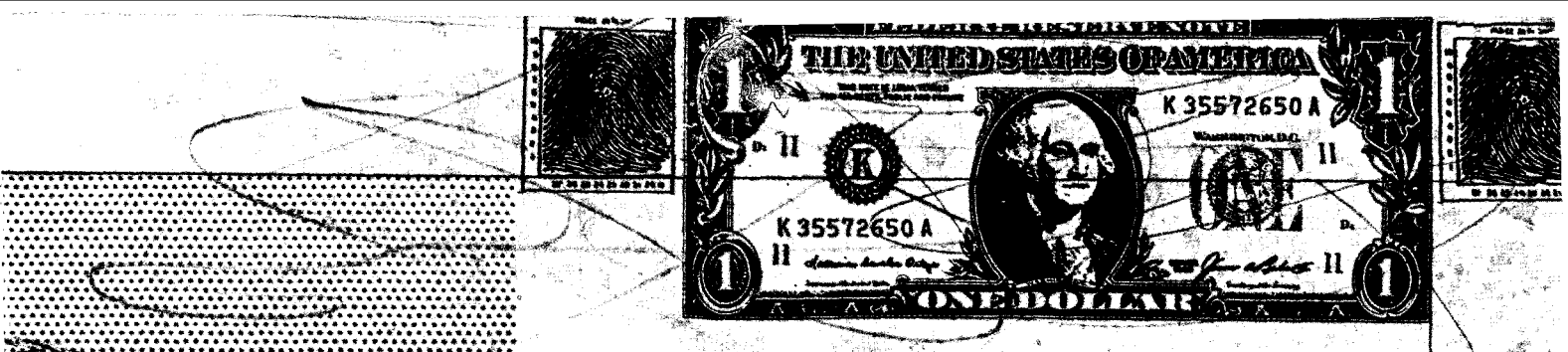
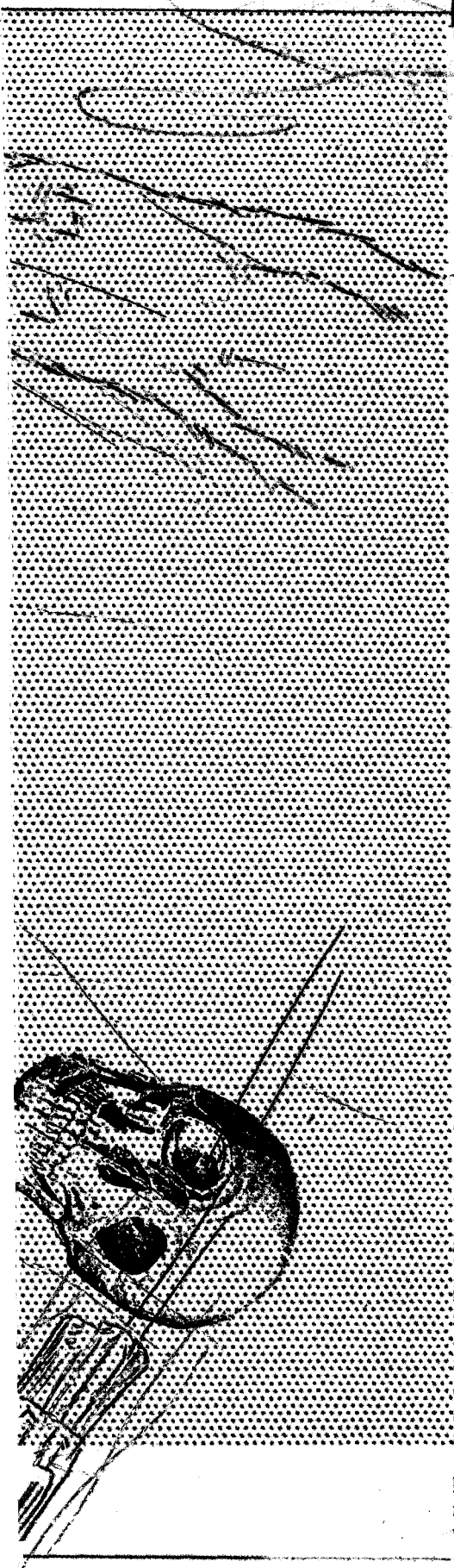


Inside the DEA

In the murky world of drug enforcement, agents lie, cheat, and steal in the name of the law.

by **Dale Gieringer**



When Basil Norris Abbott III heard that his motorcycle shop had been ripped off by a heroin-peddling bike gang, he did what any law-abiding citizen might do. After talking to the Houston police, he contacted the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. Welcoming the tip, the DEA asked whether Abbott could lead them to the culprits. Abbott complied and was duly registered as an official DEA informant in October 1973.

Unlike many informants, Abbott wasn't a drug dealer caught in the act and willing to make a deal. He did have a criminal record, having been convicted while in his teens and twenties, once for car theft and once for use of a stolen credit card. By working for the DEA, he hoped to obtain a new identity. "I was basically a pretty straight guy," he says. "I was attracted to the excitement, the glamor, the money" of the drug trade.

As an informant, or "C.I." (cooperating individual), Abbott proved successful at ferreting out drug-dealing bike gangs and introducing them to DEA agents. Over the next several years, he worked for the DEA out of Texas, Colorado, Florida, Louisiana, Utah, and New Mexico, fraternizing with narcs and drug dealers alike.

In the process, he also discovered just how obscure the distinctions are between right and wrong, legal and illegal in the world of drug enforcement. When a drug law is violated, no individual rights are abridged. There is no murder victim to be avenged, no stolen property to be returned to its rightful owner, no battered body to be made whole. And there are no crime victims to complain to the police. So DEA agents must find, or create, their own cases. In doing so, they inevitably intrude on individual lives and liberties and twist the very laws they are supposed to uphold.

In the double-dealing world of narcotics enforcement, honesty and good faith are of scant account; what matters is whether one cooperates with the government. Basil Abbott's story, with its mixture of the illegal and the unscrupulous, illustrates just how unsavory the war on drugs can become.

The DEA paid Abbott a few hundred dollars here and there, in cash, for tips leading to busts. Still, he began to have money problems. His motorcycle business was petering out, and his criminal record made it difficult to find a job. Then Abbott figured out how DEA informants make money. He began to resell the drugs that he was buying to set dealers up for the DEA, and he soon established a lucrative side practice. The DEA, he says, was not greatly perturbed: "They laughed when I told them. They said it made me more credible."

Abbott says the DEA warned him not to deal on too large a scale but allowed him to

make his living on small and medium-size deals. Abbott says he dealt mainly in marijuana and later cocaine, while informing on dealers who sold heroin. "I justified it to myself thinking heroin is this horrible stuff. You see these junkies—they're all stealing to support their habit, they're really pitiful."

The DEA refuses to discuss Abbott's activities but insists that it "does not condone" illegal activity by informants. However, people familiar with DEA operations say it is common practice for agents to look the other way. This system, while illegal, has obvious advantages. Not only does it give the DEA an inside track on the drug traffic, but it also affords a lucrative source of financial support to cooperative informants.

As peaceful as a corn field, these rows of marijuana make an inviting target for DEA helicopters. Federal law allows the government to confiscate the land.

Agents, too, sometimes deal drugs on the side, though the agency takes a much less tolerant attitude toward this behavior. Abbott says he noted frequent discrepancies between the amounts of drugs he had seen confiscated and the amounts reported by DEA agents. He believes that DEA agents took the difference—an allegation often made by drug defendants, though invariably difficult to confirm.

DEA spokesmen refuse to comment on Abbott's allegations or activities. "We cannot confirm or deny the existence of a confidential informant without that informant being in the room," I was told by agent Ron Gospodarek, Abbott's former DEA supervisor in Houston. Gospodarek sounded surprised when I replied that Abbott was in the Seagoville federal prison, near Dallas. He explained that secrecy is essential for the protection of informants' confidentiality.

It is hard to see how this objection applies to Abbott, whose identity as an informant has been a matter of public record since 1983 and who had signed my freedom-of-information request asking the agency to send me his files. A couple of months after I filed my request, the DEA said it needed $176 from me to complete processing and that "even upon receipt of the *entire search fee*, the Drug Enforcement Administration cannot guarantee that any documents will be made available to you."

Responses of this sort are typical from the DEA, renowned as the most secretive domestic agency in Washington. The simplest requests for information are routinely stonewalled or referred to the DEA's "Freedom of Information" section, where they may be censored, obstructed, and delayed for months. In 1982, the DEA issued a 104-page report criticizing the Freedom of Information Act for inhibiting its undercover activities.

Journalists who attempt to interview DEA employees are commonly asked at the outset whether their articles will be friendly or hostile. Those with potentially embarrassing inquiries are often put off with the excuse that the DEA must protect the confidentiality of its informants. After sending a $44 down payment, I was pleasantly surprised to receive a heavily censored copy of Abbott's files, which were made available because he had himself made a similar request several months previously.

During a six-month investigation of DEA activities, sources repeatedly told me that the agency fears public scrutiny because it might well expose extensive misconduct. The DEA is an agency whose modus operandi inevitably violates normal standards of human decency. It is at war not on foreign attackers, nor yet on domestic violence or terrorism, but rather on a basically nonviolent minority—the 25 million Americans who are users of illegal drugs.

Under the aegis of President Ronald Reagan and Attorney General Edwin Meese, the DEA has pursued increasingly aggressive and unscrupulous tactics of entrapment, seizure, surveillance, and paramilitary violence. Thanks to public antidrug hysteria, a compliant Congress, an uncritical press, and a court system increasingly dominated by Reaganite judges, the DEA has enjoyed virtual carte blanche to trample on individuals' rights. Like the CIA and FBI of the 1960s, the DEA has become a law unto itself, an agency out of control.

At first, Basil Abbott's status as a DEA informant gave him a charmed life as a dealer. He says that three times he was arrested on drug charges by local police, then released because of his DEA connections. (DEA files confirm that on at least one occasion in 1974 Abbott was arrested for the sale of ten ounces of Quaaludin powder in Houston and that charges were dismissed when he agreed to cooperate in initiating a case against the supplier.)

In 1977, however, Abbott's relationship with the DEA began to sour. He irked his superiors by demanding higher pay in the form of a percentage of the value of drugs and assets seized in raids. And he failed to provide crucial testimony in a methamphetamine case.

The case involved a Boulder, Colorado, drug ring that had agreed to meet Abbott in a public park. The meeting was supposed to be a "controlled buy." The DEA would search Abbott before he joined the dealers. Then, when he returned, the very fact that he had drugs on him, plus his testimony, would prove he had bought them. From the DEA's point of view, everything went according to plan—until the case got to court.

"At the court trial, [he] could not remember any of the details of the buy or who had handed the drugs to him," the agency's files read. "Since the transaction was a controlled purchase by the Cooperating Individual, his testimony was crucial."

Abbott, however, claims the deal was actually a set-up, or "plant." He says a DEA agent instructed him to plant the speed on the group after its members prudently refused to sell him drugs. He stashed the speed in the bushes, he says, then retrieved it before rejoining his DEA comrades.

"I had to testify in court," Abbott says. "The prosecutor and DEA wanted me to lie. I was afraid of perjuring myself." Whatever his reasons, he wouldn't testify, and the case was dismissed.

In January 1978, shortly after this inci-

DEA

dent, the DEA officially blacklisted Abbott for "unsatisfactory cooperation." This did not prevent him, however, from continuing to consort with DEA agents or from claiming to be an informant.

Abbott's career took a confusing twist when he became involved with agent Bill Coller, a supervisor of the DEA's air operations. An ace pilot, Coller also had a penchant for drug smuggling. He knew all of the techniques for evading Customs surveillance, having been trained in advanced flying maneuvers for DEA missions.

Sources familiar with the case say the two men started doing business together in 1979. Abbott could get cocaine and marijuana through connections in Latin America; Coller flew the drugs back. Over the next few years, Coller smuggled extensively with numerous associates. "He was good at it," recalls one of them, Larry Lewis. "He was one of the best pilots I've ever seen."

Like many narcs, Coller suffered a classic case of role reversal. "The evolution from idealistic agent to smuggler was extremely insidious," he recalls. "You didn't even know what was happening." The temptations are obvious. Narcs are constantly rubbing elbows with illegal money and drugs, and it is only natural that they should want to share in the profits. Role reversal is common enough to be regarded as something of an occupational hazard. It can even improve job performance. After becoming a smuggler, says Bill Coller, "I was a much better agent." Role reversal by its agents, however, is one lawless activity that the DEA can't afford to tolerate.

The DEA came after Abbott, then Coller, in 1983 as one by one their various smuggling associates were arrested and turned snitch. While he was wanted by the DEA, Abbott was apprehended by Mexican police in Cancun. DEA agent Richard Braziel of Austin, Texas, and U.S. Attorney John Murphy of San Antonio came down with two other DEA agents to interrogate Abbott and take him back to the States for prosecution on drug charges.

Abbott claims the Mexicans tortured him after he refused to talk when interrogated by the DEA agents and Murphy. He says agent Braziel told the Mexicans, "Beat him up good," then departed with his companions. Thereupon, Abbott says, the Mexicans beat him up, kicked him, and poured soda water down his nose until "it felt like my head was going to explode." He says the DEA officials returned the next morning to renew their interrogation, after which he was beaten again. A few weeks later, Abbott was returned to the United States, where he was treated for medical problems allegedly from his beating.

U.S. Attorney Murphy denies any knowledge of Abbott's alleged torture, though he says he did visit Abbott in jail. Agent Braziel refuses to comment on Abbott's case, saying, "I cannot acknowledge that I know what you're talking about."

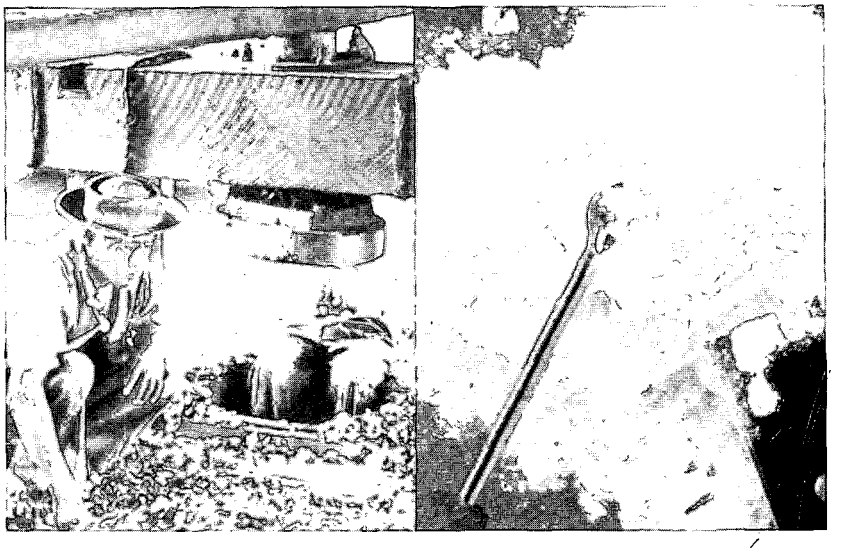
Since the mid-1970s, the DEA has been legally prohibited from engaging in police activities in foreign countries. But investigation indicates that many DEA agents are impatient with the formalities of U.S. law. "Abbott's story sounds accurate, based on my experience," says Coller. "Agents feel totally free to utilize information gained from foreign police by unsavory means, but to protect themselves, they try not to be present at beatings."

In the Abbott and Coller cases, the DEA managed to minimize embarrassing publicity by offering plea bargains. Neither man was ever brought to trial, and their connections were obscured by prosecuting them on different charges. Abbott went to court expecting to plead guilty to marijuana smuggling. But, at the last minute, the DEA changed its offer. At an extraordinary, secretive courtroom conference, conducted in whispers so the press would not hear, Abbott agreed to a more serious cocaine smuggling charge. "In all my years of practice," says his former attorney, Tex McConathy, "I've never seen a federal court where I was called to the bench and had to whisper."

Abbott is angry that he received a stiffer sentence than Coller (five years plus 15 years special parole). He fought, but ultimately lost, a long legal battle for a retrial. "They had trained me for years to do what I was doing," he complains. "Then they dropped me like a hot potato."

Coller was allowed to plead guilty to a single count of marijuana smuggling and sentenced to three years plus two years special parole. The full details of his activities never reached public light. As part of his plea bargain, Coller gave the DEA a full debriefing, the contents of which have been sealed by the government on the usual grounds that they would endanger DEA operations.

From the conventional point of view, Coller's activities were clearly illegal and reprehensible—treason in the war on drugs. Yet the deeper one digs into DEA operations, the more one is led to question the morality of the war itself. Coller, who is now out of prison and working in the construction business, says he has come "180 degrees" from where he started out and is glad to be out of the agency: "It's a sad way to make a living, it really is, running around to bars every night and lying and seducing people into criminal acts. In the beginning it's just a game, but if you're a thinking agent, it really bothers you what you do. I seldom met a 'scarface' or violent-type drug criminal like on *Miami Vice*. The vast majority of the ones I met were simply small-time entrepreneurs trying to make a buck. It really bothered me what I was doing to them, destroying their lives, their families. I look back at it and I'm really sorry. There's so many more worthwhile things I could have been doing."



Threatening America? A Latin American coca factory and its final product, cocaine, as portrayed in DEA publicity shots.

Despite cases like Coller's, many defense attorneys insist that the real problem isn't so much what the DEA does *illegally* as what it does *legally*. As the war on drugs has escalated, the courts, Congress, and the Reagan administration have given the the

DEA

DEA more and more powers to pry into the lives of private citizens.

Court decisions have made it increasingly difficult for defendants to plead entrapment. The Supreme Court has generally disallowed the entrapment defense whenever the prosecution can show that the defendant was "predisposed" to commit the crime. A leading judicial proponent of this doctrine has been the new Chief Justice, William Rehnquist, author of the 1976 landmark decision *Hampton* v. *U.S.*

Plaintiff Hampton had been approached in a pool hall by a DEA informant who asked whether he would like to make money on a heroin deal. Hampton expressed interest but avowed that he didn't have any heroin to sell. The informant obligingly supplied heroin obtained through his official connections, then arranged for Hampton to resell it to DEA agents, who arrested him. In a 6-3 decision, the Supreme court upheld Hampton's conviction on the grounds that he was "predisposed" to selling drugs.

In a stinging dissent, Justice William Brennan protested that "the Government is doing nothing less than buying contraband from itself through an intermediary and jailing the intermediary." Brennan cited the famous dissent of Justice Brandeis in the 1928 *Olmstead* case, in which the court for the first time endorsed wiretapping to enforce Prohibition: "Decency, security, and liberty alike demand that government officials should be subjected to the same rules of conduct that are commands of the citizen....To declare that in the administration of the criminal law the end justifies the means—to declare that the government may commit crimes in order to secure the conviction of a private criminal—would bring terrible retribution." But these were the dissents.

In the wake of the *Hampton* decision, some DEA agents pride themselves on "creating a predisposition" in a suspect. "In sting operations, agents will create false situations to get you involved," explains Coller. "They might tell you, 'Just offload this truck.' Then they get your friends involved." To nail down the case, agents may secretly tape a conversation carefully orchestrated to sound as incriminating as possible. Using leading questions, an agent or informant can "paraphase, restate, and say things like, 'Am I right?' in order to get the other person to adopt what's asked," explains Houston attorney Sam Guiberson, an expert on entrapment.

The DEA has stretched its techniques of legally sanctioned entrapment in recent years by getting progressively more outlandish test cases approved by the courts. In a prize case, the DEA was upheld in a 1980 sting that caught Thomas Tobias. Court records, interviews, and correspondence with Tobias reveal the leangths to which the DEA will go.

Tobias, a 26-year-old house painter, had been suffering financial problems due to a cocaine habit. These he naively sought to resolve by making his own cocaine. After looking up the ingredients in the library, he sent away for them to a certain "Precision Chemical Company" advertised in *High Times*, the drug culture magazine. Readers are invited to guess the secret identity of "Precision Chemical Co."

"It's a sad way to make a living, it really is, running around to bars every night and lying and seducing people into criminal acts. I look back at it and I'm really sorry. There's so many more worthwhile things I could have been doing."

Uneducated in chemistry, Tobias didn't know that cocaine synthesis requires sophisticated chemical techniques. Much to his surprise, when he phoned Precision Chemical about his order, Tobias was asked whether he wanted to make cocaine and was advised that, if so, the task would no doubt be beyond his ability. Disappointed, he duly canceled his order.

What happened next is disputed, since the DEA did not bother to tape the conversation. According to Tobias, the DEA asked whether he would be interested in an easier way to make money. According to the DEA, Tobias asked whether they knew an easier way to make money. In either case, it is undisputed that the DEA helpfully suggested that Tobias make "dummy dust" (otherwise known as angel dust, or PCP), offering to send him complete supplies and instructions for $500. Tobias agreed and soon received a shipment of chemicals on his doorstep at the unexplained discount price of $100.

Working with nothing but a Mason jar and kitchen pot, Tobias encountered difficulties in his efforts to make PCP. According to the court record, he phoned back 13 times for step-by-step instructions cheerfully supplied by a DEA agent. "Why did he not discourage me instead of encouraging me?" asks Tobias. "No one told me the chemicals were flammable." When he reached the last step, at which his concoction was supposed to turn into a powdery dust, he ended up with nothing but what he describes as an "unsalable gob of goo." Then the DEA agents came to the door and busted him.

Tobias and his attorney were shocked when he was convicted and sentenced to 15 years. Because Tobias was found with enough chemicals for 300,000 doses, prosecutors asked for a stiff sentence—despite the fact that it was the DEA that had specified the size of the order. Tobias was convicted of possession of and intent to distribute a controlled substance, even though the drug was actually unsalable because of his chemical ineptitude. He was also found guilty of conspiracy to manufacture a controlled substance, though his only co-conspirators were DEA agents, unindicted and still at large.

In a landmark decision, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld Tobias's conviction but ordered a resentencing. The majority ruled that the case "set the outer limits to which the government may go in the quest to ferret out and prosecute crimes." The DEA has taken full advantage of the decision, treating the Tobias case as a model for further sting operations, despite charges that it is creating crimes by providing normally unavailable chemicals.

The DEA also attacks drug crime by selling illegal drugs themselves. Advertising its supplies through its network of informers, it offers confiscated drugs for sale, then busts buyers when they come to pick up the goods. Where necessary, the DEA uses high-pressure sales tactics. In a 1984 conspiracy case, DEA agents talked Matthew Brozyna into a $1.3-million, five-ton marijuana deal. In court, the agents testified that they tried to pump up the deal as high as possible. When Brozyna asked to break up the deal into smaller loads, agent Ted Weed turned him down quoting the Godfather, "Yeah, well, we'll cut you a deal. You can't refuse."

Offenders can even be convicted of drug crimes without possessing any drugs at all. Elijio Briceno, former minister of energy and communications of Belize, was arrested in April 1985 after accepting front money from DEA agents in Miami for alleged drugs that he never delivered. Briceno's troubles began the previous October, while he was still serving in the government of Belize, a nation that had attracted the hostility of the Reagan administration for its easygoing attitude toward marijuana. Briceno in particular had offended the DEA by officially opposing its request to spray marijuana fields with poisonous paraquat. (In Belize, the DEA is not hampered by Environmental Protection Agency restrictions).

While Briceno was still in office, DEA agent Robert Ridler approached Briceno, asking to buy cocaine or marijuana. When Briceno expressed interest, the DEA im-

portuned him to come to the United States with some goods. According to Briceno's attorney, Reber Boult, Briceno put off the DEA, insisting that they first bring the money to him. Weeks of haggling ensued, during which Briceno's party lost the 1984 elections and Briceno began facing financial difficulties. At last the DEA persuaded him to fly to Miami in return for some $32,400.

Briceno was arrested when he picked up the cash. He was charged with three counts of conspiracy and 20 counts of using the telephone to commit a federal felony (punishable by four years each); the DEA itself had initiated at least 16 of the calls, and by telephoning Briceno from North Carolina, it managed to get Briceno tried in Wilmington, one of the most conservative and conviction-prone districts in the country.

In court, attorney Boult argued that his client had no intention of delivering drugs but was only angling for front money, a not-uncommon scam in Belize. While DEA spokesmen publicly portrayed Briceno as a "large-scale marijuana dealer," Boult argued that he had none of the resources, ability, or wealth of a major dealer. According to a witness's sworn statment, DEA agent Russell Reina had admitted privately that "Briceno was *not* a kingpin."

Nevertheless, Briceno was sentenced to seven years and a $50,000 fine, much to the outrage of fellow Belizeans. More than 3,000 of his fellow citizens signed a petition for his release. "Belizeans are suddenly coming to realize that the U.S. government, through its DEA agents, has little or no regard for the constitutional rights of our Belizean citizens and our country's sovereignty," opined a columnist in the *Belize Times*.

On occasion, the DEA has forcibly abducted suspects from foreign countries by extralegal means. Court records reveal that John Zabaneh, a Belizean citizen, was apprehended in November 1985 at the Guatemala City airport by Guatemalan police and two DEA agents. At a court hearing, a companion of Zabaneh, Henry Matthews, testified that a U.S. agent wearing a "Miami Vice" cap had accosted Zabaneh at Guatemalan customs. Zabaneh's attorney says the agent, who was accompanied by three or four Spanish-speaking companions, produced a plastic bag of white powder, which he claimed to have found in Zabaneh's luggage. When Zabaneh replied that he didn't have any luggage, the agent dropped the subject.

Zabaneh and his companions were then ordered into an airport room, where Zabaneh was strip searched, handcuffed and held overnight. Without a warrant or extradition request, the agents then flew him to Houston, where he was arrested not for committing a crime on U.S. soil but for being the Belizean connection in a New Orleans marijuana case. Neither Guatemala nor Belize protested his abduction.

The U.S. attorney in the case denies Matthews's story and says that no agent like the one he described was present. Neither of the DEA agents who were present ever testified in court—the court record says they were out of the country and therefore unavailable. But their official DEA report claimed that they were not actively involved in the arrest and merely took custody of Zabaneh from the Guatemalans, who admittedly acted at the DEA's instigation.

U.S. magistrate William Sanderson, Jr., ruled that the DEA agents had in fact participated in the arrest, even though they had no legal authority to do so. But he decided that the legality of the DEA's actions had no legal bearing on Zabaneh's case. Sanderson ruled that Zabaneh should be held for trial because U.S. law has long held that defendants can be tried no matter how they are brought into a court's jurisdiction, under what is known as the "Ker-Frisbie" doctrine. Zabaneh was convicted on marijuana charges. The two DEA agents are still at large.

Since the Reagan administration has shown no interest in disciplining agents for illegal arrests abroad, the upshot of the Ker-Frisbie doctrine is that DEA agents have every incentive to kidnap foreign suspects whenever possible.

Armed agents held Judy Rolicheck's family at gunpoint for two and a half hours. They shot a family dog that had the audacity to bark. They had no warrant and made no arrests.

Investigation of the DEA's methods turns up one of the most ominous recent trends in drug enforcement—the progressive erosion of property rights. The DEA regularly exercises its power to seize vehicles used for drug transport. It has acquired an impressive fleet of airplanes and cars, and DEA agents often ride around in the fancy cars seized from smugglers when masquerading as dealers.

Because the rules of evidence make it easier for the government to confiscate property than to convict drug-felony defendants, it is not uncommon that a vehicle is confiscated but its driver gets off. The quantity of drugs need not matter. Coller says he once helped the DEA seize a Piper Seneca airplane with one-twentieth of a gram of pot dust; the court, he says, upheld the seizure.

Congress has enacted progressively more sweeping confiscation laws in recent years. Under the Racketeering Influenced Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) and Continuing Criminal Enterprise Act (CCE) of 1970, the government can confiscate all proceeds of organized criminal enterprises, including cash, valuables, businesses, and other private assets. RICO and CCE marked a departure for federal law, overturning a 180-year-old ban on criminal forfeiture of estate—the legal procedure under which lawbreakers forfeit their property to the state instead of merely being sued for back taxes and obligations.

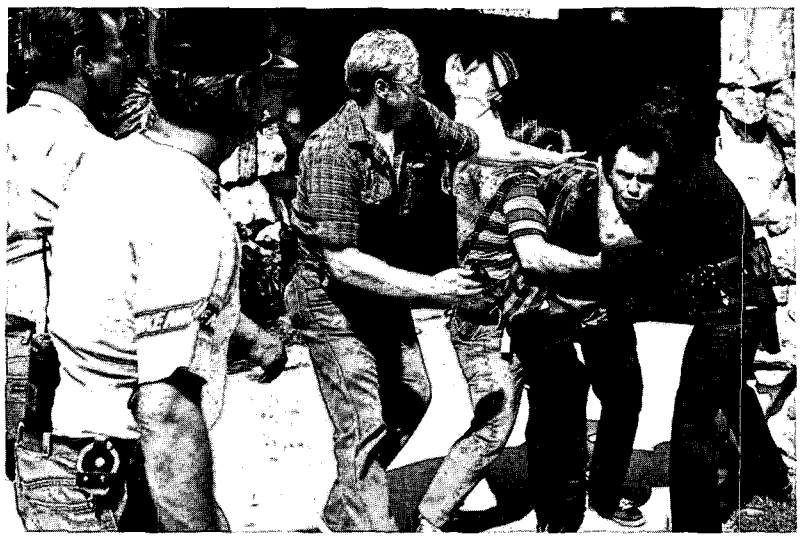
The RICO and CCE forfeiture provisions were dramatically expanded by the Comprehensive Crime Control Act (CCCA) of 1984, which extended confiscation to *any* drug felony, not just those involving organized crime. The CCCA, aptly passed in the symbolic year 1984, was pushed through in a pre-election rush by House Democrats not wishing to be outdone by Reagan in appearing "tough on crime." Under this law, the government can demand forfeiture not only of the proceeds of drug trafficking, as under RICO, but also of any property *used to facilitate* illegal drug activity, including houses and land.

As soon as the police have determined there are incriminating drugs on someone's property, the federal marshal can seize it by obtaining a warrant of "probable cause." The owner then has 20 days to file suit to recover the property or forfeits it automatically—whether or not he ultimately is convicted of any crime. The suit is tried under civil procedures, where the state need only produce a "preponderance of evidence," rather than proof beyond a reasonable doubt. The CCCA also lets the government freeze the assets of drug defendants immediately upon indictment to ensure that they do not dispose of them before the trial is over.

So, if you grow marijuana for sale in your backyard, federal prosecutors can seize your house and property whether or not you used "drug money" to purchase them. This draconian provision applies exclusively to drugs, so your home would still be secure if you instead engaged in counterfeiting, extortion, kidnapping, or murder.

To the victims, forfeiture is a chilling

experience. In August 1985, police in Ashland, Oregon, raided the home of Kenneth Jaffe and found 143 marijuana plants growing there. They turned the case over to the U.S. attorney, who promptly got a warrant for seizure. Jaffe returned home to find that his house and 5.6 acres of land no longer belonged to him. He had to lease the house back from the government and pay taxes as well as rent to stay there. According to his attorney, Jaffe had acquired the house legitimately with life insurance money from his wife, a murder victim. But, like other defendants, Jaffe had *all* of his land seized, even though only a portion had been used to grow marijuana. The legality of this procedure is still in question, and recent court decisions indicate that confiscation may eventually be restricted to only the land actually used to grow marijuana.



Busted: *A suspect struggles after he is caught in an undercover drug operation.*

The DEA boasts that forfeiture statutes have "dealt a devastating blow to the once financially secure drug trafficker." While that may be doubtful, in view of widespread acknowledgement that the DEA's war on drugs is failing, one thing is clear: the forfeiture statutes have handed the DEA the dream of every government bureaucracy, a source of revenue independent of Congress. According to DEA figures, revenue from forfeiture totaled $49 million in fiscal 1985—or about 15 percent of the DEA's $328-million budget—up from $30 million the year before and only $6 million five years earlier. Assets seized from drug traffickers have also included an avocado ranch, Arabian horses, emeralds, and a rock recording studio.

Forfeiture is the latest weapon in the government's ongoing war against marijuana growers in northern California. Originally advertised as a way of attacking large-scale growers with hundreds or thousands of plants, forfeiture has become a weapon against "mom and pop" growers. U.S. Attorney Peter Robinson reports that most of the 19 forfeiture cases in the area have involved 30 to 50 marijuana plants. Defense lawyer Ron Sinoway alleges that 90 percent of the forfeitures have been against growers of less than 100 or so plants.

Last year the government's premier forfeiture attempt backfired when it tried to auction off a 208-acre ranch in Mendocino County, California, that it had confiscated from Rique and Natasha Kuru in exchange for dropping marijuana charges. Local residents offered only two bids—10 cents and 30 pieces of silver. The property, which was heavily mortgaged, reverted to the bank, and the government ended up taking a loss. Prosecutors now seem to be focusing on growers with large capital investments in their homes, usually long-time area residents. Meanwhile, local residents report that clever growers have turned to planting their crops on highly leveraged property, public land, and property belonging to others.

Perhaps the most controversial new aspect of the CCCA is the provision that lets the government claim property back to the time of the crime, not the conviction. Anyone who has received drug money has to forfeit it unless he can establish that he is an "innocent owner." The government has used this principle to sue defense lawyers for fees paid by losing drug defendants, arguing that drug criminals have no right to spend their supposedly ill-gotten money on high-priced legal assistance.

Defense lawyers have raised a storm of protest, claiming that forfeiture of attorneys' fees undermines the constitutional right to counsel. "The government would be the sole arbiter of which lawyers are rewarded and which punished," declares San Francisco attorney Ephraim Margolin. Some courts have agreed. "For the first time in recent years the administration has been put on the defensive because they have gone much too far," says Margolin.

The DEA has used other tactics to undermine the lawyer-client relationship. "There's a trend to use aggressive drug enforcement to warp, distort professional identities," attorney Sam Guiberson, the Houston expert on entrapment, told me.

One of his clients, attorney Mallory Horne, former speaker of the Florida State Senate, was enticed into a drug-money laundering operation by FBI agents posing as accountants. Horne was then offered a plea bargain if he would take an FBI agent into his law firm. The agent would have publicly posed as a legitimate lawyer while actually working in undercover investigations against selected clients. Horne rejected the scheme, denounced the government, and was convicted.

Another of Guiberson's clients, Dennis Bell, was the victim of a scheme in which two of his supposed codefendants were secretly enlisted as informants by a Florida drug agent working for a DEA task force. The idea was to penetrate private discussions with Bell and his lawyer, Joel Dick. Unbeknownst to Bell or Dick, the phony codefendants had been wired for sound so that agents could listen while Bell and Dick discussed defense strategies with them, revealing information that the government could have otherwise obtained only by offering Bell a plea bargain.

In a 1983 attack on lawyer-client privileges, DEA and IRS agents obtained a search warrant against San Diego attorney Philip A. De Massa, a long-time bete noire of the government who was accused of involvement in a marijuana conspiracy. After a three-day search of De Massa's office and home, reported the *Los Angeles Times*, agents came away with 95 cartons containing 1,100 confidential legal-case files, most unrelated to the drug conspiracy. Agents also seized De Massa's wedding picture and his son's Toronto Maple Leafs t-shirt, whose design an agent thought resembled a marijuana plant. A federal judge issued a restraining order sealing De Massa's files, but not before the DEA had had a few days to comb through them.

The De Massa case provoked an uproar among lawyers. "I think they are creating a reign of terror," California attorney Gerald Uelmen told the *Times*. "Across the country, we're seeing a lot of attorneys being targeted and questioned about their client relationships, all in the name of cracking

LOS ANGELES TIMES PHOTO

down on drug trafficking."

The drug war has also taken its toll on privacy and constitutional rights. Earlier this year, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled for the first time that police can conduct warrantless searches of private backyards by means of helicopter. In the formerly peaceful countercultural communities of California's remote redwood wilderness, the DEA, with help from state and local police, has been waging the helicopter-propelled Campaign Against Marijuana Planting, or CAMP. Its agents, says defense attorney Sinoway, "used to chant, 'War on Drugs, War on Drugs!' Now they chant, 'Rambo, Rambo!' Their attitude is that the king can do no wrong."

In a suit filed against CAMP, local residents complained of unlawful searches and seizures, violations of privacy, unwarranted and hazardous helicopter surveillance, and outrageous cowboy behavior by agents, who often get carried away in their counter-countercultural offensive. Resident Ben Bertain, for example, testified that CAMP officers cut down seven trees on his land, including "my prized Christmas tree, which I had cared for and trimmed for the Christmas season." Bertain was never charged with a crime.

Nor was anyone in Judy Rolicheck's family. But that didn't stop 25 armed CAMP officers from surrounding their home, holding them at gunpoint for two and a half hours, and shooting a family dog that had the audacity to bark—all without benefit of a search warrant. "It appears," found federal Judge Robert P. Aguilar, "that the nearest marijuana garden was approximately 600 yards away and was not visible from the Rolichecks' property." Aguilar granted a preliminary injunction against CAMP last year and in March ordered that the group be placed under the control of an independent, court-appointed monitor.

An ironic effect of the government's escalating war on drugs has been to increase the opportunities for agents to break the law. Drug cases afford fertile ground for corruption, because the illicit status of drug money makes it easy for agents to steal with impunity. The modus operandi is simple: agents make a raid and lift valuables or drugs in the process. Since most everything a drug dealer owns is subject to confiscation, defendants stand little to gain by protesting the depradations of narcs. If they do, few judges or juries are inclined to believe them. If they don't, the agents may testify in their favor at the trial.

The extent of theft by DEA agents is not easy to ascertain. Rumors of DEA ripoffs abound among drug defendants, but such reports are by nature difficult to verify. Basil Abbott says he heard DEA agents talk about lifting watches and jewelry in raids. "They used to joke about it," he says. In the course of investigating this article, I learned of a more serious case that supports these contentions. A West Coast couple says DEA agents stole tens of thousands of dollars from them in front of other family members but didn't arrest them; the agents assumed, correctly, that the couple wouldn't dare to protest.

Ex-agent Coller insists that he never saw federal agents steal money or personal valuables. But he admits he worked for "a pretty straight office."

As the drug war's failure becomes obvious, many of its partisans are calling for even more of the same: stiffer penalties, even capital punishment. Yet 70 years of history demonstrate that prohibition doesn't make drugs go away and in many ways makes matters worse.

The law creates a fundamental dishonesty by distinguishing between licit and illegal drugs. Throughout my investigation, sources repeatedly noted that DEA agents often drink heavily yet defend their legal form of drug abuse against those who equate it with, for example, smoking marijuana. "Every night agents would drink at the bars and talk about busting some hippie for smoking dope," says Coller, who himself abstains from alcohol and drugs. He adds, "It just doesn't compute. Isn't a bartender a dope dealer?"

Indeed, at least 40,000 Americans die each year from the effects of alcoholism; 35,000 more are victims of alcohol-related accidents and violance. In contrast, while cocaine is reputed to be a "killer drug," only 613 deaths from cocaine addiction were reported by the National Institute on Drug Abuse last year. But the answer, as shown by the history of Prohibition, isn't to outlaw alcohol or other drugs.

Not only does drug prohibition raise the price of drugs and create enormously profitable opportunities for criminal enterprise, it also drives many addicts to crime to pay for their habit. "Drug crime" is a problem created by the law.

LOS ANGELES TIMES PHOTO

Sic 'em, boy: Canine cop Rex and his Customs officer friend check out a car at the Mexican border.

So, ultimately, are the DEA's misdeeds, legal and illegal. By sanctioning the use of police powers against market transactions and private behavior, the public gives DEA agents permission to see themselves as crusaders, pursuing "higher" ideals in the name of Society. Laws that punish drug offenses more severely than crimes against individuals reinforce this image. Like crusaders throughout history, DEA agents righteously disregard individuals' rights—or even the law itself—in pursuit of their cause. While younger agents tend to be gung-ho, many veterans fall victim to cynicism or corruption, signs of contempt for laws that are inherently unjust and unenforceable.

Thus agent-turned-smuggler Bill Coller says he came to realize: "The government puts out a lot of bullshit about drugs. I got tired of lying to people about why it's so bad. Thousands of people die from just eating food. We blockaded pot, and people turned to harder drugs like cocaine. It was completely foreseeable. Now the government's trying to control ether because it's used in cocaine. People are switching to benzene, which causes nasal cancer. So who's the greater criminal?" ◻

Dale Gieringer is a writer and policy analyst affiliated with the Decision & Ethics Center in the Department of Engineering-Economic Systems at Stanford University.

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Socialism

Reports of its death have been greatly exaggerated.

by **Robert Hessen**

In recent years, a number of American commentators have proclaimed that socialism is dead as an ideal. I wish they were right, but their obituary is premature. Socialism as an ideal is actually thriving.

It would be a mistake to judge the appeal of socialism by the number of votes cast for socialist candidates. By that standard, of course, socialism is nearly dead, at least as compared to the times earlier in this century when eloquent, charismatic leaders like Eugene V. Debs or Norman Thomas won enough votes to make the Socialists the third-largest party in America.

If you want to locate the citadels of socialism today, you must look elsewhere —specifically to the college campuses, where self-styled socialists are increasingly visible and vocal. Unlike the situation of two or three decades ago, when socialist teachers were embattled outcasts, today they are magnets who attract large enrollments for their courses. They are held in high esteem by their colleagues, and when they write textbooks, the leading publishers compete for the opportunity to publish them.

Admittedly, socialist teachers are still only a minority. But their strength is clustered in the fields of economics, sociology, history, political science, law, and philosophy, thereby giving them the greatest opportunity to shape the viewpoint of future teachers, journalists, politicians, and opinion-makers. The academic socialists are under no illusion that their struggle to transform America into their ideal society can be won overnight. Instead, quite realistically, they concentrate their energies on a long-range goal: persuading young people that socialism offers a noble blueprint for America's future.

It may astonish you that socialism remains a vital and dynamic ideology, given its track record—namely, that in every country where socialism has been tried, it has produced economic stagnation, and usually political tyranny as well. That is the paradox I propose to examine here: how a doctrine that has failed everywhere can still manage to attract new advocates.

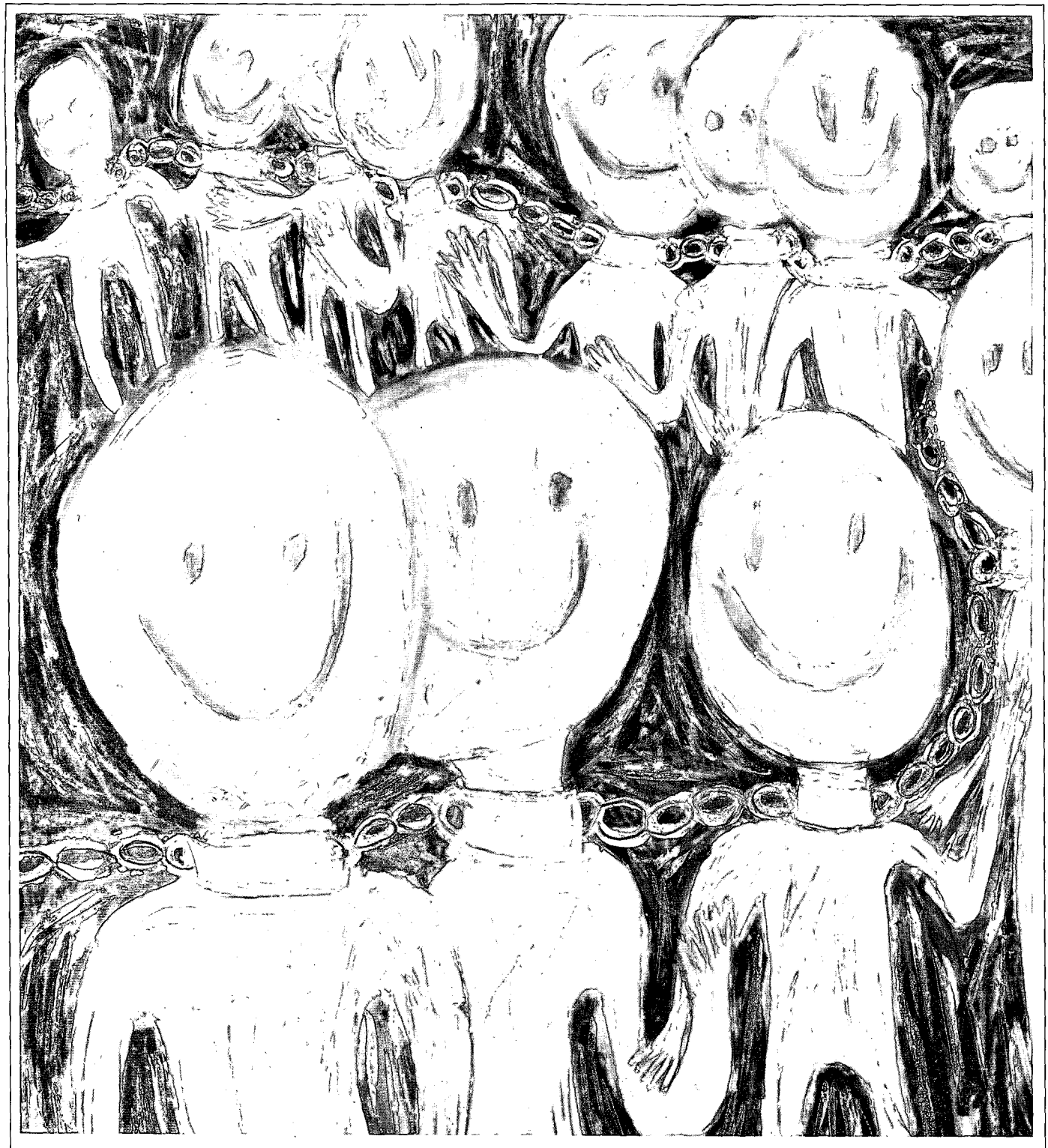
Socialism, a term coined in the 1820s, originated as a reaction to individualism. The earliest socialist writers, men like August Comte and Charles Fourier, took individualism to mean three things: that individuals possess inalienable rights, that society should not restrain individuals from pursuing their own happiness, and that economic activity should not be regulated by government. In place of individualism, these writers proclaimed an organic conception of society, stressing ideals such as brotherhood, community, and social solidarity. They also set forth highly detailed blueprints for model utopian societies in which collectivist or socialist values would be institutionalized.

The earliest socialist writers drew their inspiration from Jean Jacques Rousseau's 1762 treatise, *The Social Contract*, a work that serves as an inspiration for collectivist writers to this day. Their blueprints for utopia aimed to embody the ideals set forth by Rousseau, specifically that human egotism or self-interest would be eradicated and human nature changed so that individuals no longer would pursue personal happiness as their highest goal. Instead, Rousseau sought a social system that would train men to "bear with docility the yoke of public happiness" (that is, the well-being of society or the community as a whole).

Utopian socialism was eclipsed when Karl Marx began to attack the movement. He did not oppose the moral ideals the utopians had proclaimed, but he thought they were dangerous because their approach might not result in the overthrow of bourgeois society. The utopians' mistake, according to Marx, was that they were merely urging people to reject capitalist or individualist values and to embrace socialist or collectivist values. But if this approach was too successful, the result might be a premature revolution to topple bourgeois society, and the revolution might be crushed.

Marx, instead, created a second species of socialism. He called it "scientific socialism" and claimed to have discovered the laws of history. Socialism, he announced, was the next stage of history, and its arrival was inevitable.

Why inevitable? Because under capitalism, according to Marx, workers are condemned to perpetual poverty; they are never paid more than the barest minimum required to stay alive and breed children. But the worker cannot even count on obtaining bare subsistence, because a "law of increasing misery" operates under capitalism. As workers saw their wages reduced *below* the subsistence level, and as they faced the



BETSY SCHELD

specter of death by starvation, they would rise up and overthrow the capitalist system —and replace it with socialism, by which Marx meant a system wherein the means of production, distribution, and exchange have been nationalized and the state operates a centrally planned economy that produces prosperity for everyone.

Like the utopian socialists, Marx appealed to moral ideals. He promised that socialism, by abolishing classes, would abolish class warfare and that an everlasting era of harmony, cooperation, and equality would result. But while the utopians were merely preaching socialism, Marx was predicting its inevitable triumph with the same certainty that an astronomer can predict the next eclipse of the sun or the moon. And while the utopians offered detailed blueprints for future model communities based on socialist ideals, Marx offered no details at all about how a future socialist society would be structured or how it would operate.

Marx's vagueness about the features of socialism was not unique. Other 19th-century socialist theorists also failed to provide any details about their ideal society. For

example, Ludwig Feuerbach observed that "the future life is nothing else than the present life freed from that which appears as a limitation or an evil," and Pierre Proudhon defined socialism as "every aspiration towards the amelioration of our society." Like the Christian theologians who explain that heaven will not be like anything known on earth, socialist theoreticians simply asserted that socialism would be the opposite of capitalism—and then left it up to everyone's imagination to fill in the details.

This analogy to Christianity and to heaven is not accidental: a movement in England and America called "Christian socialism" held, in essence, that socialism is the embodiment of Christian ethical ideals. These writers and preachers pointed out that the Bible and the early Christian fathers had rejected private property, the pursuit of wealth, and the ethics of self-interest. For example, British poet and critic Matthew Arnold declared that "the Bible enjoins endless self-sacrifice all round." And George D. Herron, an American clergyman, achieved prominence with his 1890 sermon "The Message of Jesus to Men of Wealth." In it he declared: "Strictly speaking, a rich Christian is a contradiction of terms."

To validate this viewpoint, the Christian socialists quoted St. Luke's account of the apostles: "Not a man among them claimed any of his possessions as his own, but everything was held in common." They quoted from St. Mark that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." And they invoked St. Ambrose: "You are not making a gift of your possessions to the poor person. You are handing over to him what is his."

The Christian socialists held that Christianity and socialism are natural allies: that Christianity is the theory of socialism and socialism the practice of Christianity. This viewpoint never dominated the socialist movement because most socialists were secularists and many were agnostics or atheists. Nonetheless, this view continues to be expounded in the leading divinity schools and shapes the attitudes of future clergy.

Both utopian socialism and Christian socialism were rather limited in their appeal compared to Marx's scientific socialism. At the end of the 19th century, *socialism* essentially meant Marx's vague blueprint: nationalization of the means of production, distribution, and exchange and a centrally planned economy. But it remained an untested concept or ideal.

Soon, though, Marx's intellectual heirs obtained an opportunity to put his theories to the test, beginning in the Soviet Union after 1918. Soviet Russia was to be a socialist showcase, proving that a centrally planned economy could produce a workers' paradise by eliminating poverty and unemployment and by creating unprecedented conditions for every individual to employ his talents to the fullest in the service of society.

It soon became clear, however, that the Soviet experiment was a failure. A persistent pattern of crop failures and shortfalls in industrial production began to emerge—and when these occurrences were so regular that they could no longer be denied, Western socialists were hard-pressed to explain them away.

It is forced labor, involuntary servitude that socialists are offering as a humane, compassionate alternative to capitalism!

It was even harder for Western socialists to evade or excuse the Soviet Union's use of terror, repression, censorship, and forced labor—but some of them managed to do so, dismissing the steadily mounting evidence as lies and slanders created by the Western capitalist press. Other socialists tried to salvage their faith by announcing that the system in the Soviet Union really was not socialism; rather it was "state capitalism." A much smaller group actively denounced and publicized the evils and failures of the Soviet system. People like Emma Goldman, Bertrand Russell, and John Dewey reaffirmed their dedication to democracy and their loathing of dictatorship and urged that the verdict on socialism be postponed until socialism was adopted in a democratic society.

An opportunity for such an experiment arose in Great Britain after World War II. From 1946 to 1949, a socialist government, headed by Clement Atlee, held the reins of power. But the nationalized industries of England proved to be colossally inefficient; it was obvious that Marx's vague notion of central planning had left socialist planners with no tools or guidance. Socialism had suffered another seemingly fatal blow.

Simultaneously, at the end of World War II, the American economy was undergoing a dramatic revival and resurgence. The Great Depression was past and the wartime mobilization was over. The postwar depression that the socialists had confidently predicted did not occur; instead, the economy boomed, and products which had been unavailable or rationed in wartime were available again, often in cheaper and improved forms.

This development provoked some socialists to launch an attack on capitalism from a new perspective. Formerly, following Marx's lead, they had condemned capitalism because it allegedly dooms workers to perpetual poverty. Now, they argued, the real evil of capitalism is that it leads to *prosperity*. They began to attack the legitimacy of consumer demand. They claimed that goods that have to be advertised in order to sell could not be serving any authentic human needs. They charged that consumers are brainwashed by Madison Avenue and reduced to the status of robots who mindlessly crave whatever the giant corporations choose to produce and advertise.

Perhaps the classic expression of this approach was the exhortation made by Professor Herbert Marcuse to young socialists. He urged them to persuade working men and women that they don't need washing machines, dishwashers, television sets, or automobiles, because these goods are really tools of oppression and enslavement. They make workers complacent or content, thereby robbing them of the revolutionary fervor necessary to topple capitalism and establish a socialist society.

Socialist writers offered assurances that in a socialist society, only "authentic" needs would be fulfilled, and consumers would not be confused by too many choices. Not surprisingly, very few American workers showed any enthusiasm for socialism when given a choice between being proletarian revolutionaries and owning a home or an automobile. The socialists, both in England and America, were out of step with the working class in whose name they claimed to be speaking.

Facing the prospect of talking only to themselves, socialist theoreticians began reformulating their program. The most daring and influential blueprint was offered by C. A. R. Crosland, a British writer, in his 1956 book, *The Future of Socialism*. He wrote that the most urgent task confronting socialists was to begin treating Karl Marx's ideas with "judicious irreverence."

Crosland proposed that the nationalization of industry should no longer be the essential goal of socialism. He reviewed a large body of socialist writings and discovered that their common theme was a concern with moral values—compassion for the needy and helpless, a belief in equality and a classless society, and a protest against the alleged inefficiencies of capitalism, especially mass unemployment.

The common theme, he wrote, is that

socialism stresses a collective responsibility for the relief of social distress or misfortune. But, he noted, the goal of relieving distress and promoting equality does not necessarily require government ownership of industry; these same objectives can be pursued equally well by means of higher taxation, limitations on dividends, and appropriate inheritance taxes.

If you ask how Crosland's blueprint differentiates a socialist from a liberal democrat, your question is right on target. Crosland's redefinition of socialism blurred the formerly distinct line that separated socialists from modern liberals. Once the socialists were willing to accept private ownership of industry, they could no longer be ostracized as radicals or revolutionaries; instead, the new approach made them seem flexible, tolerant, and open-minded.

The new-style socialists called themselves social democrats and democratic socialists. Their approach was not acceptable to all socialists. Some—chiefly younger and less interested in improving the immediate political appeal of socialism—regarded the new formulation as sheer pragmatic expediency, a retreat from principle, and a shameless compromise with the inherent evils of capitalism.

In light of the historical record of socialist regimes, however, it would have been hard for anyone to demand a return to central planning and nationalization. Instead, another new version of socialism was created, one that turned away from Marx and back to Rousseau and the utopian socialists.

The new approach, a creation of the 1970s, is called "economic democracy," a name designed to create the impression that socialists are the intellectual heirs of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. Their goal, they say, is to complete the work of the Founding Fathers, by extending democracy beyond politics, into the realm of production.

Exactly what alternative do the advocates of economic democracy offer in place of traditional central planning? They propose a system of small, self-sufficient communities in which each enterprise would be operated as a cooperative owned by local consumers. They want all large corporations to be dismantled and their individual plants and factories converted into locally owned cooperatives. Central planning will be implemented at the local level: all decisions about investment and production will be made collectively by the community.

A more accurate name for their blueprint would be "communitarian socialism." Each person will receive one vote, and the decision of the majority will be binding on everyone.

By making everything a subject for the political agenda, communitarian socialism would suffocate free choice and individual liberty. Although the blueprint gives each individual a vote and therefore, seemingly, the power of choice and informed consent, there would be no private spheres of action. The community will be able to stifle every able and ambitious person simply by voting against any plans or goals he wants to set for himself.

Advocates of communitarian socialism present their ideas as democratic, not totalitarian. They don't advertise the coercive aspects of their blueprint but instead stress the moral ideal that underlies their viewpoint: the ideal of equality. They hold that no one deserves to own or to earn more than anyone else and that all forms of inequality are unjust. (The only exception is if the community collectively decides that someone has greater needs than others and therefore deserves a larger allotment.)

Of course, the reign of equality will not be left up to individual choice. The socialist blueprint sets up conditions for *enforced* equality. But if enforced equality is to exist, then individuals must be forced to surrender their independence. Now the biggest source of independence is private property, which allows individuals an asset they can use or trade for their own benefit.

And private property doesn't refer only to money, land, shops, or factories. Central planning also must harness human labor, because labor is a central component of production. This means that human labor must be socialized—in other words, that *self-ownership must be abolished*. Otherwise, individuals might withhold their labor and thus frustrate the workings of the master plan.

I realize that this point may seem startling, so let me quote a leading socialist writer, Robert Heilbroner: "The creation of socialism requires the curtailment of the central economic freedom of bourgeois society, namely the right of individuals to own, and therefore to withhold if they wish, the means of production, including their own labor."

And why, according to Heilbroner, must individuals forfeit the right to control their own labor? He answers: "The full preservation of this bourgeois freedom would place the attainment of socialism at the mercy of property owners who could threaten to deny their services to society—and again I refer to their labor, not just to material resources —if their terms were not met." What is another way to describe "curtailing" an individual's right to own his own labor? It is forced labor, involuntary servitude—and that is what the socialists are offering as a humane, compassionate alternative to capitalism!

Forthright statements like Heilbroner's are rare and should be publicized by those who oppose socialism. Usually socialists evade the whole issue of forced labor by claiming that it won't be necessary to coerce anyone. They assume that unanimity will exist in a socialist society, that everyone will voluntarily put others' goals ahead of their own and that altruistic behavior will be the hallmark of "socialist man." They decline to discuss the fate of those who won't fall into place, and they neglect to consider the transitional period before the new species of automatic altruists comes into existence. The mistake of the antisocialists has been to allow the socialists to get away with this evasive tactic.

Not only are free-market commentators wrong to proclaim that socialism is dead as an ideal; the antisocialists are the ones chiefly to blame for its long life. For they never attack the moral ideals proclaimed by the socialists, allowing those ideals to stand virtually unchallenged.

It was common for many years, for example, for opponents to dismiss socialists as "misguided idealists." Instead of challenging the ideals—instead of showing that enforced equality requires continuous coercion —free-market advocates merely noted that socialist ideals are impractical or that they run contrary to human nature.

But there is nothing in this approach that discomforts or discredits the socialists, because their moral idealism is never challenged. It does not injure the socialists to call them utopians; quite the contrary, utopianism has been the primary basis of their appeal to idealistic young people. Professor F. A. Hayek was correct when he wrote that "socialist thought owes its appeal to the young largely to its visionary character." Obviously, the only way to undermine the appeal of their utopian ideals is to expose them to critical scrutiny—to show that they are incompatible with human liberty and are necessarily coercive and repressive.

But what have the defenders of capitalism been doing instead? Conservative economist Carl Snyder once declared flatly, "Everyone is greedy," proposing this fact as an obstacle to socialism because it applies to socialists too. They will exercise extraordinary power within the new system. Instead of being faceless humanitarians or anonymous Good Samaritans, they will enjoy their positions of power and prestige and so are as morally tainted as everyone else. This view, in essence, is the core of the "new class" label that many conservatives have tried to pin on the communitarian socialists.

But trying to discredit socialism by calling its advocates a "new class" is obviously doomed to failure. It doesn't challenge socialist *ideals*, but only the psychological motives of the socialists, which really are irrelevant.

Another approach taken by conservatives is to argue that the selfish behavior embodied in capitalism can be sanctified by its altruistic consequences. Here's how conservative economic journalist Herbert E. Meyer recently tried to defend capitalism. "An entrepreneur," he writes, "will start a new business only when he wants to make more money. Admittedly, this rather selfish motive is not one to uplift the spirits. However, it does uplift the incomes of an awful lot of ordinary people by creating jobs for them that otherwise would not exist."

Such a statement makes business innovators seem like moral lepers. They are the carriers of social disease—selfishness—that society should tolerate only because someone else benefits from their activities.

Another conservative writer, George Gilder, has tried to sanctify business by claiming, not that capitalism has altruistic consequences but that capitalists really are altruists. Gilder's book *Wealth and Poverty* was hailed as a long-overdue moral defense of capitalism. Briefly, he claimed that businessmen are not motivated by self-interest or selfishness, despite what their socialist-critics claim. In the process of investing and producing, they bestow definite and specific benefits on others—products for consumers and wages for workers—but they have no guarantees of receiving any specific benefit in return. And, says Gilder, such giving without a guaranteed return is the essence of altruism. This approach so openly accepts the premises of socialist morality that it obviously cannot serve to undermine the appeal of socialism.

Recently, another conservative economist tried to vindicate capitalism by appealing to genetic determinism. Drawing on the field of sociobiology—which claims to find parallels between the conduct of human beings and insects—this economist defended "selfish behavior." It is ultimately beneficial to the human race, he wrote, if people of ability and ambition pass on their genes to future generations. He added that it would be "ethically ideal if men could live up to the maxim proclaimed by Karl Marx: from each according to his ability, to each according to his need." But our selfish behavior is genetically determined, so let's be practical and learn to live with the ineradicable selfishness of human nature.

Does that seem like an effective rebuttal to socialism, an argument that would discomfort a socialist adversary? Hardly so.

Perhaps the weakest rebuttal appeared in *The Coercive Utopians*, by neoconservatives Rael Jean Isaac and Erich Isaac. They argue that the real evil of the socialists is that they proclaim ideals at all, because ideals are inherent weapons of tyranny. Whoever holds any ideals will want the power to impose them on everyone else. Therefore, they say, the antidote to the poison of socialism is to abandon ideals of every sort; their alternative to idealism is "balky pragmatism."

Along the same lines, a religious conservative, writing in *The Freeman*, condemned any ideology that holds out the prospect of improving living conditions here on earth. He ascribed the massacre at Jonestown to the fact that the followers of the Reverend Jim Jones had succumbed to the lure of "utopia now." Then he added: "But the message of the New Testament is that this life on earth is not a utopia; it is not heaven. In this life we are pilgrims journeying toward something better than anyone has ever known, and Jesus came to show the way. The philosophy of delayed gratification has always been embraced by the people of God." His response to the moral idealism of the socialists is to exhort everyone to suffer silently and await entry into heaven. This is surely not a viewpoint that will keep idealistic young people from being attracted to socialism.

Differences can be eradicated, and equality of income achieved, only in a totalitarian society.

What will defuse the appeal of socialism? If the defenders of capitalism want to discredit socialism, they will not succeed by claiming that socialism is inefficient or that central planning is not technically feasible. They can only succeed by directly confronting the challenge of socialist moral ideals.

Socialism appeals to young people by proclaiming ideals that seem to be noble. I know this from personal experience, because when I was 17, I was a socialist. The choice, I thought then, was simple: morality versus material comforts. The spokesmen for capitalism kept stressing efficiency and the capability of capitalism to produce bigger bathtubs and better ball bearings. By contrast, the socialists really never deny that capitalism is an extremely productive system, but they claim it is profoundly immoral, and they thereby win the hearts and minds of idealistic young people.

The socialists, from the first utopian theorists more than 150 years ago to their descendents today, keep invoking soul-stirring concepts. They talk about solidarity, brotherhood, cooperation, community, consensus, participation, fraternity, and, above all, justice and equality. I was unable to reject the appeal of socialism until I learned to translate the slogans of socialism—to see how they actually would operate in everyday life. As long as they are left at the level of noble abstractions, without being translated into concrete terms, they will continue to attract the young and idealistic.

The socialist ideal of equality must be confronted head-on, not evaded. The point to be stressed by defenders of capitalism is that equality will never arise spontaneously and can only be sustained by coercion. Individuals are obviously different from each other—different in ability, ambition, intelligence, ingenuity, and inventiveness; different too in their willingness to expend effort, to run the risk of failure, and to take on new challenges. Some who succeed decide to rest on their laurels; some who fail decide not to risk failure again. But others who succeed take each new success as a stimulus to new effort, and some who have failed are resilient—and they persevere until they do succeed.

These undeniable differences of character and personality are the source, in large measure, of the economic inequalities that exist within the same country or region and even within the same family. Those who propose to eliminate them can only succeed by suppressing inventiveness, ability, and creativity or by stripping individuals of the material consequences that flow from these characteristics, such as wealth, prestige, and influence. Human differences can be eradicated, and equality of income achieved, only in a totalitarian society.

Most young people don't realize that when they are attracted to the ideals of socialism. The challenge confronting the defenders of capitalism today is to persuade idealistic young people to reject every variety of socialism. For those who favor a system that respects and protects individual liberty, that fosters independence and freedom of choice, that rewards exceptional effort and ability, that tolerates diversity and dissent, and that recognizes that the fundamental form of private property is self-ownership, there is only one choice possible in the marketplace of ideas: capitalism. ◧

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by Robert Chapman Wood

Wipe Out!

One tax cut after another has been eaten up by the tax no one will touch.

I often wonder whether my in-laws are unique. When my father-in-law retired a couple of years ago, my mother-in-law actually refused to apply for Social Security payments.

Mom is the hard-working sort, but she never took many jobs outside the home. She and her husband knew she hadn't paid much into the Social Security system; actually, they had been pleasantly surprised at the size of the check Pop alone received. They thought they could live on Pop's Social Security check plus the tiny pension they would get from an aerospace company where Pop had spent a decade many years ago.

So when friends told them that Mom qualified for Social Security benefits of her own, they were skeptical. "I never worked, so why should I be receiving Social Security?" said Mom.

For a full year, she stayed away from the Social Security office. Finally, she made the trip. The benefits were just too good to turn down. With amazement in her voice she told me, "We almost do better now after taxes than we did when Dad was working."

I'm proud of Mom and Pop for their reluctance to take government money. And I'm glad they're now well off. But their generation's gain, unfortunately, is their children's loss—especially if their children want to have children of their own.

Real *after-tax* incomes of working people over the last decade and a half have fallen significantly below not just the levels of the 1970s but even the levels of the mid-1960s. And the culprit is the same program that is making Mom and Pop well-to-do.

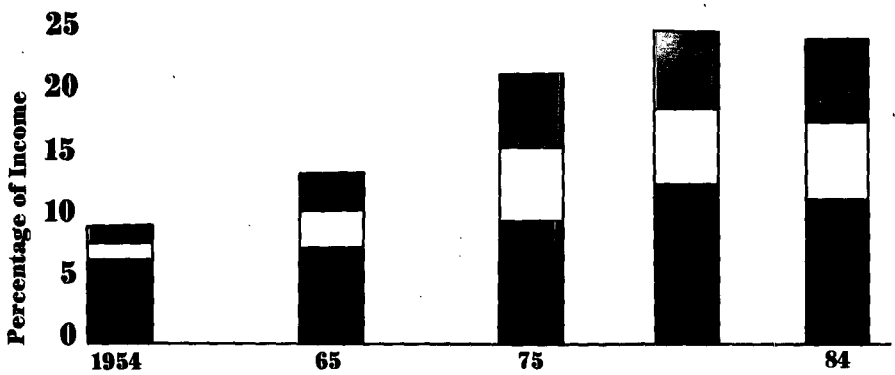
Sometimes it's hard to believe that working people are poorer today than they used to be. After all, real income per capita continued to increase even after the oil shock of 1973 brought the Vietnam era boom to an ignominious end.

Unfortunately, however, working folks *are* poorer today than they have been at any time since the 1960s. They face a villain that doesn't affect the retired in quite the same way—that old certainty, taxes. Even after several Reagan-era cuts, taxes remain so much higher than they were in the '60s and early '70s that they've wiped out all the rest of the economy's gain for average working people, especially those with families.

Tax reformers just haven't attacked the main problem. What is killing off economic progress for working people is my mother-in-law's benefactor, the sacred cause for which thousands of government-subsidized "senior center" programs in church basements lobby—Social Security and Medicare.

If you listen to the common wisdom, you may blame defense spending for America's fiscal plight. There *is* plenty of waste in the Pentagon, but if you look back

Tax Cuts, What Tax Cuts?



Taxes On Median Working Families:

- Income-tax burden
- Direct Social Security tax burden
- Burden of employer's share of Social Security tax

Source: Data from *Making Tax Choices* by Joseph J. Minarek, Urban Institute Press, 1985.

more than a couple of years you'll see that over the long run the generals' portion of the national income has hardly increased at all.

How about welfare free-loaders? By the most inclusive methods of counting, the increase in spending for the poor has never been more than a small portion of the increase in spending for the elderly.

The real villains are Social Security and Medicare. In 1985 they paid out $254 billion, almost seven times more than 15 years earlier, after adjusting for inflation. And if you believe it's "politically impossible" to reverse the rise of Social Security and Medicare, you're condemning today's working people to an overtaxed future.

The Biggest Tax

The effect of Social Security and Medicare on working people is easy to gauge because we pay for these programs with a special tax. Economist Joseph Minarek of the Urban Institute in Washington, D.C., has calculated the burden on median-income families of ordinary federal income taxes and Social Security taxes (which also fund Medicare).

Tax changes from 1954 to 1984 hurt median and just-below-median income families badly. Ordinary income taxes rose from about six percent of the median wage earner's income back in 1954 to more than twice that in 1981, finally falling off to a bit more than 10 percent in 1984. But this rise in ordinary income taxes was a mere blip compared to the increase in Social Security taxes. Over the same 30 years, workers' direct Social Security taxes rose from a little less than two percent of income for median families to a full seven percent—almost as big a bite as regular income taxes. (See the figure above.)

But even that increase grossly understates what employed people pay for Social Security. Politicians perpetrate a sleazy scam regarding Social Security tax collections. The direct tax you see on your pay stub (as the FICA contribution) is matched by another tax collected from your employer.

Congress tells you: The Social Security tax is "only" seven percent. But it tells your boss: For every dollar you pay an employee, take out seven cents in direct tax on the employee and then pay us an *additional* seven cents. So the tax on a dollar's wages is really 14 cents. The median worker faces far more in Social Security tax alone than the entire 10.29 cents on the dollar he now pays to support the rest of the federal government. And the so-called "employer's share" of Social Security has risen just as fast as the direct Social Security tax—more than 320 percent since 1954, even after adjusting for inflation!

Unlike ordinary income taxes, both sorts of Social Security taxes start with the first dollar of wages. No private employee, from an inner-city teenager bagging groceries after school to the president of General Motors, is exempt. (Actually, Social Security taxes hit poorer people harder because income above a certain level, a level that Congress has steadily increased, isn't subject to Social Security taxes.) By increasing the cost of hiring a new worker, high employer taxes not only decrease salaries, they increase unemployment.

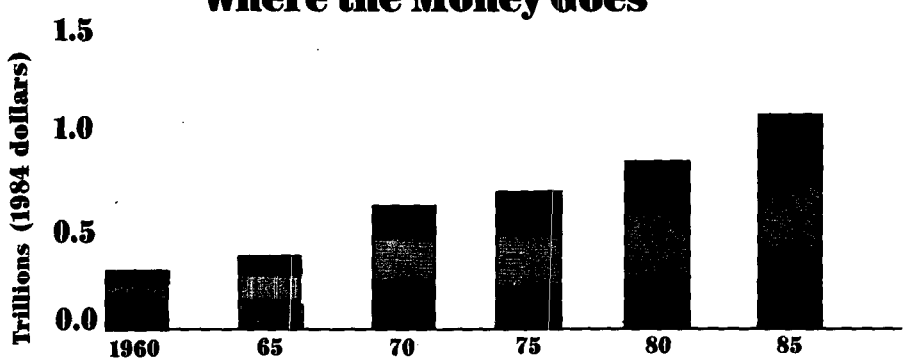
Without Social Security tax increases, life would be far easier for working people —probably about as easy as it was before the recessions of the 1970s.

The Good Old Days Really Were Good

Before taxes, the median male full-time employee made $24,000 in 1984, slightly less, adjusting for inflation, than the $24,700 he made in 1971. (See figure on page 39.) When you add back the employer "contribution" to Social Security, median pretax incomes are even closer to the level of 1971—$25,700 in 1984, compared to $25,800 in 1971.

But after-tax incomes remain way down where they were back when Lyndon Johnson was just starting to finance the Vietnam war. In 1965, the median full-time working male took home $5,700—the equivalent of about $20,000 today. He was moving up and probably pleased with his paycheck. But 19 years later, he would take home $100 or so *less* in real terms. Today, looking back on more-prosperous years—1971, for exam-

Where the Money Goes



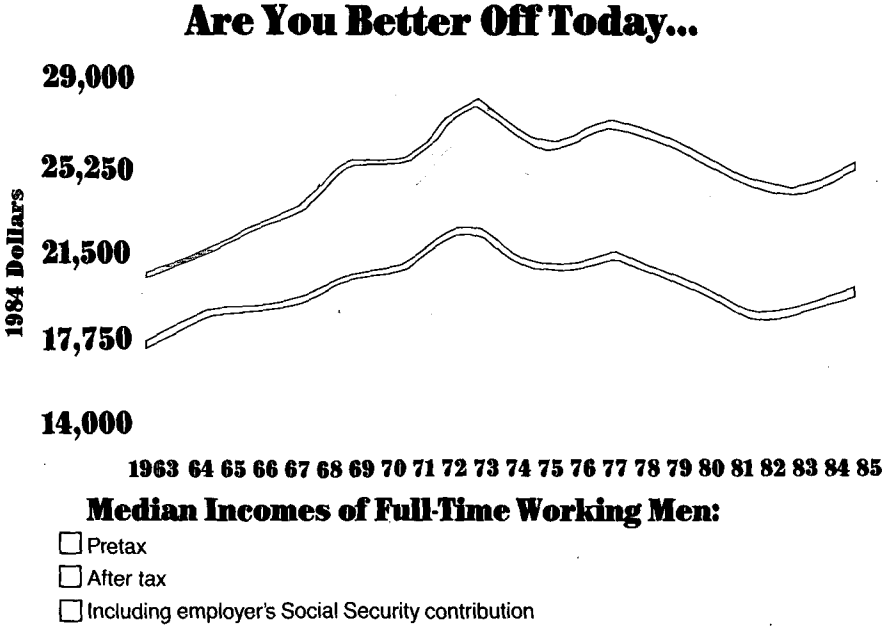
- National Defense
- Interest on national debt
- General spending except national defense and interest
- Trust funds

Source: data in *Statistical Abstract of the United States* 1982-86.

ple, with take-home pay of $22,400—he has reason to grumble.

The tax increases of the last generation have not only been large, they've also hit hardest at those working people who need money most—the ones trying to raise families. Back in the 1960s, most of the federal taxes a working person paid on his income were ordinary income taxes. If he had children, he benefited from substantial deductions. The personal exemption was $600 per child at a time when people's pre-inflation incomes were around $7,000 a year. Today, that would amount to a $2,000 exemption on an income of some $23,000. But that's not what fathers and mothers get today. Instead, the personal exemption is just a bit more than $1,000 per child.

The tax reform recently emerged from Congress *will* address this problem by increasing the personal exemption, eventually to about the 1960s level. But taxes have changed since the '60s. Median families now pay more in Social Security taxes (including the employers' contributions) than they do in ordinary income taxes. And Social Security taxes allow no exemptions at all. Is it any wonder Americans aren't having enough kids to reproduce themselves?


Are You Better Off Today...
29,000
25,250
21,500
17,750
14,000
1984 Dollars
1963 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85
Median Incomes of Full-Time Working Men:
Pretax
After tax
Including employer's Social Security contribution

Source: Data from Council of Economic Advisers, *Economic Report to the President,* 1986 and Minarek, *Making Tax Choices*

The Big Picture

Looking exclusively at the total tax burdens of ordinary working people exaggerates the effect of Social Security taxes on the nation as a whole. Other programs are funded more by taxes on the rich and the upper middle class. But the exaggeration isn't by much. Total government spending adjusted for inflation increased about fourfold from 1960 to 1985. Today it's composed of:

- *Trust fund expenditures* (Social Security, Medicare, federal employees' pensions, etc.): up 4.7 times since 1960 (adjusted for inflation), and currently running $346.4 billion a year.
- *Defense spending*: up 1.5 times, to $253.8 billion.
- *National debt interest*: up 5.1 times, to $130.4 billion.
- *All other spending*: up 4.1 times, to $347.4 billion.

You can list many programs within "other spending" that can be classified as rapidly growing boondoggles:

- Housing programs, up from $1.4 billion a year (in constant dollars) in 1970 to $25.4 billion today;
- Food and nutrition assistance, up from $2.8 billion in 1970 to $18.7 billion today;
- Health-care programs, excluding Medicare, up from $11.1 billion in 1970 to $27.2 billion today;
- "Revenue sharing," up from nothing in 1970 to an estimated $4.6 billion in 1985.

But it doesn't make sense to spend your life fighting to cut programs that spend a mere $25 billion and treating the $254-billion, ever-increasing, Social Security and Medicare programs as untouchable. American quality expert J. M. Juran taught the Japanese they could make industry run better by "separating the vital few problems from the trivial many." If you attack the big problems, you can make big progress, he said, but if you decide they're hopeless, then your situation is hopeless. The same is true of government spending.

With this kind of bad news, why aren't baby boomers storming Congress to demand cuts in Social Security taxes?

They certainly aren't incited to action by the media, which rarely report on how taxes have blasted the incomes of working people. And reporters aren't likely to trip over the story, because no regularly published statistics tell them the *after-tax* incomes of ordinary employed people.

True, readily available figures on wages and median incomes reveal that pretax incomes have fallen just slightly since 1973. But statistics on "per capita disposable income," or income after taxes, show an increase over the same period. These disposable-income figures, however, include *everybody*—working and nonworking alike—and count "transfer payments" such as Social Security just the same as earned income. By lumping together well-off retirees (remember Mom and Pop) and their working kids, these disposable-income figures hide the effects of Social Security taxes.

Lobbyists for elderly people—people in what are rightly called the "golden years"—point out that trust fund payments such as Social Security checks don't increase the federal government's deficit. Therefore, they say, these programs needn't be cut in order to end the government's current spending crisis.

On one level, they're telling the truth. Since Social Security and Medicare have their own outrageous taxes to pay their bills, the checks they issue don't increase the deficit. But that only leads to another question: Why have politicians found it acceptable to raise taxes more than 320 percent on working people over the past few decades to cover only two programs for a single group?

Social Security used to be politically acceptable because working people could expect more money when they retired than they paid in taxes. This is no longer true. In 1960, 4.5 workers were paying taxes to support every individual on Social Security. By 1980, the pyramid had turned upside down; every worker was supporting 3.2 beneficiaries. As the nation gets older and older, we cannot expect working people to accept lower and lower living standards to support more and more people.

Proposals to privatize Social Security need to be taken seriously; some are sloppy, but the idea behind them is important. Baby boomers need to organize, to build pressure groups as strong as the senior citizens' lobby. Otherwise, they will see their futures, and their children's, sacrificed to reelect politicians who prey on old people's fears. r

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What to Save When the Book Burners Come

From R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr., to Karl Hess, writers tell us what they'd keep.

Books. I recall a childhood filled with them—picture books, storybooks; later on, novels, biographies, encyclopedias; works on art, history, archaeology, architecture, nature. Name the subject, we had a book about it. I liked my books for their pictures, their tales, their nuggets of knowledge, their whimsy, their idiocies. I even enjoyed the dictionary, engrossed by the scope of mankind's linguistic versatility.

Don't get me wrong. I was no bookworm. I wasn't one to curl up in a corner at every chance, nose in a book. I liked books, but largely for the real-life experiences they inspired me to seek out. Most of all, I liked books because they so grandly illustrate what a varied lot we are.

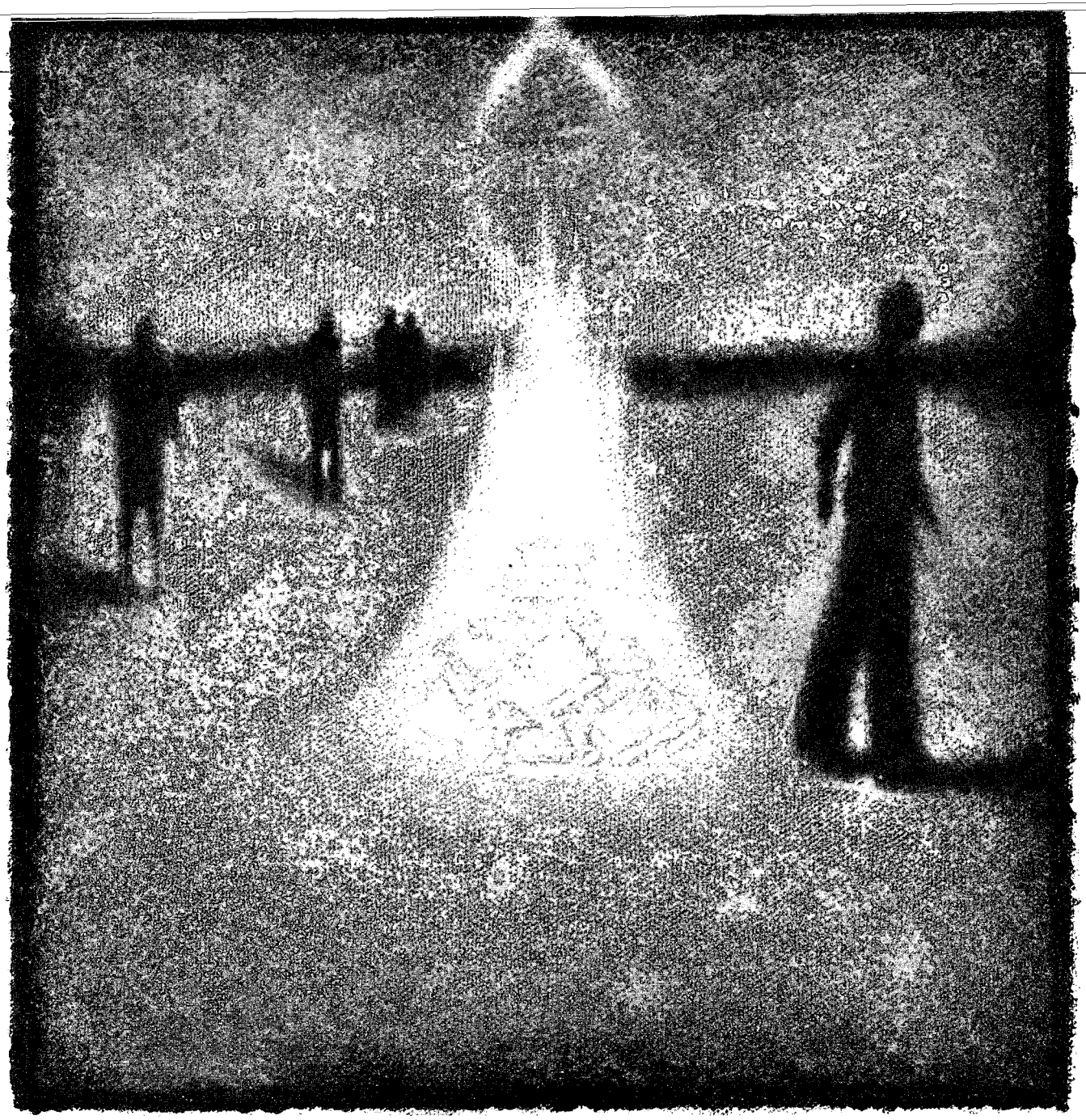
A glimpse at my own shelves proves the point. I've got a book of irreverent poems by Shel Silverstein ("God gave us fingers—Ma says, 'Go wash 'em.' / But God gave us coal bins and nice dirty bodies. / And I ain't too smart, but there's one thing for certain / Either Ma's wrong or else God is") tucked in beside Euell Gibbons exhorting me in *Stalking the Wild Asparagus* to eat fried cattails. Then there's Wilhelm Reich's *Function of the Orgasm*, or Gore Vidal telling me in his *Collected Works* that Barry Goldwater's "one creative contribution (in the family business) was the invention and promotion of men's shorts decorated with large red ants in the pants." And the (first) *Whole Earth Catalogue* tells me everything I ever wanted to know about everything.

Somber epics—*War and Peace*—sit side-by-side zesty remnants of the '60s—Tom Wolfe's *Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*. I have a book telling me that George Burns Sex Franchises might be a good thing to get in on as the baby boomers start hitting 70. It reposes next to a book that says the sexual revolution in Europe, which brought women à table with men in the Middle Ages, made it no longer genteel to "blow one's nose on the tablecloth or wipe one's hands on one's dog."

Even a cursory survey of my not-so-grand library confirms how knowledgeable, nerdish, profound, and petty we can be. Above all, my library reminds me we are all unique.

But alas, our uniqueness is under seige. The bookburners are upon us, "running about," as novelist Ray Bradbury warns, "with lit matches. Every minority, be it Baptist / Unitary, Irish / Italian, Octogenarian / Zen Buddhist, Zionist / Seventh-day Adventist, Women's Lib / Republican / Mattachine / Four Square Gospel feels it has the will, the right, the duty to douse the kerosene, light the fuse."

Censorship is no new affliction. The prim and patriotic have long sought to banish "dirty books" and "un-American ideas" from our shelves. But our schools and libraries, bookstores and magazine racks, are today increasingly prey to these would-be umpires of our ideas.



ILLUSTRATIONS-DAVID TILLINGHAST

Poor Shakespeare! His *Romeo and Juliet* is under fire for "encouragement of suicide and drug use." His *Macbeth* fares no better, targeted as a tome of "death, suicide, ghosts, and Satan." Bookburners have set their sights on classics like *The Wizard of Oz* (I guess it fosters witchcraft) and *Catcher in the Rye*, the Merriam-Webster College Dictionary (for unacceptable definitions—Orwell, are you listening?), and *Ms.* and *Redbook* magazines (too risqué!). Others have targeted Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* for their allegedly degrading depiction of blacks.

Civil-libertarian lawyers, Bill of Rights in hand, are dutifully putting up a fight. But legal victories snatched here and there offer only partial comfort. The greater battle is against the humorless, joyless, sinister intolerance that springs from a fear of individuality.

Ray Bradbury had it exactly right when he wrote in *Fahrenheit 451*, his chilling account of a world of bookburners: "So now do you see why books are hated and feared? They show the pores in the face of life. The comfortable people want only wax moon faces, poreless, hairless, expressionless." Worse still, the censors want the world's face to be their own.

Classics and trash, good sense and nonsense, reflect what man is—warts and all. Try to remove the warts, fill the pores, cut the callouses, and pretty soon you have a bunch of lusterless wax moon faces.

Ray Bradbury depicts such a soulless, uniform world in his 1950 classic, *Fahrenheit 451*. But even in this monotonous world of mush brains, a few outcasts "become," by committing to memory, their most cherished tomes—the Bible, Thoreau's *Walden*, the complete essays of Bertrand Russell, *Gulliver's Travels*, Plato's *Republic*, works by Tom Paine, Byron, Machiavelli, Gandhi, Confucius, and Jefferson. Books survive unscathed in the minds of the renegades.

If the nightmarish world of Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* were upon us, what would some of us choose to preserve?

That's the question REASON posed, for this year's special book section, to various writers and scholars. Those who replied illustrate once again what a varied lot we are.

— Lynn Scarlett

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

Conservative humorist and editor-in-chief of *The American Spectator*

Had I not just finished Armando Valladares's *Against All Hope*, I would have objected, perhaps derisively, to the suggestion that human beings are competent to consign whole books to memory. However, in chronicling his 22 years of torture at the hands—and feet—of Castro's adept jailers, Valladares reminds his readers of the wonders humans can perform. Awareness of this human capacity is why, I suppose, many of us value personal liberty. So possibly I could memorize a few books, but in the service of rebuilding a civilization they would have to stimulate the intellect, the moral sense, the spirit, and the imagination. Thus, rather than literature, I would resort to works of philosophy, history, and religion.

Let us include a collection of Shakespeare's plays, for they cover all the aforementioned disciplines plus literature. Let us include *The Politics* and *The Nicomachean Ethics* by Aristotle, and throw in Plato's *Republic*. Aristotle will assure that our new civilization values freedom, reason, and virtue; and Plato assists in all this but reveals the dangers of freedom's antithesis.

Only an ass would deny generations yet to come that combination of ribaldry and politics, philosophy and religion, inhering throughout the Bible. Finally, let us not forget to include an anthology of editorials from *The Nation*, that we might all be reminded of mankind's weakness for becoming dolts and cads. And did you ever read Thomas a Kempis's *Imitation of Christ?* Valladares seems to have been fortified by it, and the conditions your editors present to me suggest that in the incunabular years of our new civilization, some of us will be in need of fortification.

Poul Anderson

Science fiction author, *Tau Zero, Orion Shall Rise*, &c.

For facts and background on which thought must base itself if it is to mean anything, and for some of the best of such thought, I would preserve: (1) the King James Bible, preferably annotated—a cornerstone of Western civilization and, in this version, the English language; (2) the complete Shakespeare, also preferably annotated—people would realize what's been taken away from them; (3) a good one-volume world history—with all its faults, H. G. Wells's *Outline* might still serve; (4) *The Federalist Papers*—my copy appends both the Articles and the Constitution; (5) *On Power*, by Bertrand de Jouvenel—a vatic work, which would point out that the bookburners aren't the only enemies of liberty; (6) *Philosophy of Mathematics and Natural Science*, by Hermann Weyl—a guide for the eventual reconstruction of these endeavors.

For books that arouse emotions and give personal insights, I would preserve a second, probably more idiosyncratic, list, its criteria being evocativeness and the sheer joy of language: (1) Homer—especially if I'm allowed to learn Attic Greek; (2) Shakespeare again; (3) *The Family Mark Twain*—maybe I'm cheating a bit, since this volume includes several books as well as some of the best short pieces; (4) *Den Lange Rejse* (in English, *The Long Journey*), by Johannes V. Jensen—a tremendous, mythic account of man's growth from the first taming of fire to the Age of Discovery; (5) *The Complete Sherlock Holmes*—okay, not the greatest of literature, but storytelling art at its peak and a picture of an era when freedom was vigorously alive; (6) *Rudyard Kipling's Verse*—he isn't often very subtle, but nobody would sound better at an outlaw campfire!

Walter Williams

Economist and author, *The State Against Blacks*

One wonders whether bookburners would put the torch to science books, but just in case I would grab Van Nostrand's *Scientific Encyclopedia*. Weighing in at 20 pounds, it represents the most complete single source of scientific reference material.

As sure as night follows day, some people in the new world would opt for the "fairness" of socialism. That's why I'd take along Adolph Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels's *Communist Manifesto*. These books could be used to make the lesson clear that there are few conceptual distinctions between socialism and Nazism.

Just in case one of these forms of totalitarianism were to grab hold in the new world, I'd take along Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*. Since its eloquent arguments for freedom rallied our Founding Fathers against the tyranny of King George, it might serve a similar purpose in the new world. To capture the wisdom of Locke, Hume, and Adam Smith in one small bite, I'd also grab Milton Friedman's *Free to Choose*. It is the best readily understood single source of the strongest arguments for voluntary exchange and individual liberty.

Finally, since all work and no play tires the soul, I'd take along Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. It makes for fine stories and great political satire. Furthermore, the work could be easily adapted for our children. We need

only to get Gulliver to refrain from urinating on the castle grounds in his voyage to Lilliput and eliminate that bizarre experiment in his voyage to Laputa where the natives go through the seemingly futile exercise of trying to reduce human excrement to its original food.

Leonard Liggio
Historian and president of the Institute for Humane Studies

The following are the books I have felt to have been personally of importance for me intellectually. Henri Pirenne's histories of Europe, especially his *Economic and Social History of Medieval Europe*, gives an introduction to the development of market relations. Hilaire Belloc's *The Servile State* provides an introduction to the growth of the state that he follows through in his many books on European history, especially of the French Revolution. Albert J. Nock's *Our Enemy, the State* presents an analysis of the 20th-century statist revolution. John U. Nef's *War and Human Progress* shows that the industrial revolutions arose not in warring Europe but in peaceful England and that pure and applied science flourished most in peace and least in war. Robert A. Taft's *A Foreign Policy for Americans* summarizes the Hoover-Taft position that war preparation led to growth of government and that war undermined economic structures, paving the way for the popularity of communist insurgencies. Charles Callan Tansill's *Back Door to War: The Roosevelt Foreign Policy, 1933-41* has the dean of American diplomatic historians completing the work of the dean of American political scientists, Charles A. Beard, in explaining the role of the Roosevelt administration in American intervention in the Second World War.

William Simon
Former Secretary of the Treasury and author, *A Time for Truth* and *A Time for Action*

Here are my recommendations, my list of books that might sustain our heritage of liberty and limited government: the Bible, to recover the Judeo-Christian heritage of human dignity; Adam Smith's *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, to recover the essential importance of liberty as a cause of prosperity; *The Federalist Papers*, to recover the philosophical basis of the U.S. Constitution and the importance of limited government in sustaining our fundamental freedoms; Friedrich von Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*, to recover the lessons our generation has painfully learned, that reliance on the state to do what individuals can do for themselves leads inevitably to ruin; Winston Churchill's *The Second World War*, to tell an unborn generation how we almost lost our civilization by accommodating tyranny and at what cost we saved ourselves; Whittaker Chambers's *Witness*, to tell the story of one man's odyssey from infatuation with totalitarianism to appreciation of liberty and to demonstrate what the stakes are between these stark choices; Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, to show how democracy is supported by customs and institutions and how it is threatened by the temptation to sacrifice liberty in favor of equality; Joseph Schumpeter's *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, to outline the choices with which we are faced, and to emphasize the importance of moral habits in maintaining our system of private enterprise; Carl Sandburg's *Life of Lincoln*, to demonstrate what great leadership in crisis is and how Americans were able to find such a leader in a time of supreme crisis; *A Time for Truth*, my own diagnosis of the ills of our time and a call to return to those truths that made our nation great, based on my reading of the above works.

Nat Hentoff
Civil libertarian, jazz critic, and writer for the *Village Voice*

My choices would include Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*, Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *A Hundred Years of Solitude*, Charles Dickens's *Bleak House*, and T. S. Elliot's *The Four Quartets*.

Erika Holzer
Author, *Double Crossing*

My powers of memory, once acute, have practically atrophied since leaving the institutions of higher learning many years ago (where memorizing was so much in demand). So our dissident leaders are asking a lot, given my first two choices: Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead* (725 pages!) and *Atlas Shrugged* (1,168 pages!!). Quite simply, I cannot imagine a world without either.

While there is no more eloquent symbol of intransigent individualism than *The Fountainhead*'s Howard Roark, he inspires *me*, more precisely, for never letting pain penetrate too deeply and for achieving the enviable goal of serenity while struggling for his values in an irrational

world. In the world of the bookburners, such inspiration should prove invaluable.

I see *Atlas* as our political, economic, and spiritual blueprint for the future. But even more important, perhaps, is its sheer emotional impact as a work of art. The larger-than-life comes to dramatic life, and any soul starved for the sight of human potential—for romantic heroes like Francisco D'Anconia—will find a lifetime of sustenance.

It would be an impoverished world, indeed, without the literary genius of Victor Hugo somewhere in evidence. Forced to choose from among his lushly romantic, value-laden novels, I would pick *Ninety-Three* for its unforgettable characters, engrossing and deeply moving plot, and superbly integrated theme—one that no dissident can be reminded of too often: loyalty to values.

Every dissident movement needs an authentic hero to emulate, and I know of no greater inspiration than Vladimir Bukovsky. Within the pages of his autobiographical *To Build a Castle: My Life as a Dissenter* can be found courage, integrity, a probing, analytical intelligence, much wisdom, and the breathtaking experience of watching one man—one intransigent soul—stand immense and victorious in defiance of evil.

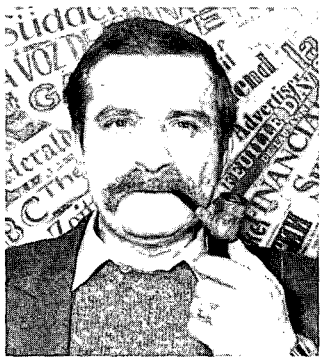
But in the dispiriting world of bookburning tyrants, inspiration is not all. One needs to fight *against*. Surely, the oppressed would be tempted to slip into mysticism—an orgy of "suffer today and live for an other-worldly tomorrow." What would happen to the resistance movement? Gladly, then, would I memorize George Smith's inestimable *Atheism: The Case Against God*. Take it from an ex-Catholic: no good-faith argument can withstand its irrefutable logic.

For the laissez-faire capitalist in exile busy planning revolt, impatient with peroration, yet eager to know pure truth, he will find it in swift, sure strokes in Henry Hazlitt's rousing little classic: *Economics in One Lesson*. No economic fallacy can survive his common-sense expose.

Tom Sharpe
British novelist and political satirist, *Wilt, The Throwback*, &c.

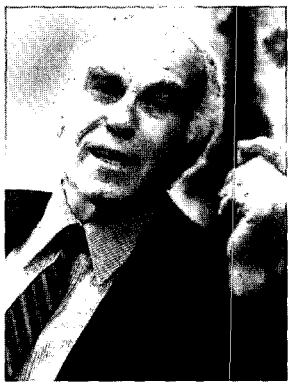
For the most part I would take "the low road" and memorize novels I've enjoyed in the same way that I've enjoyed music—in other words, without any regard for "intellectual content." I suppose it can be argued that every book has content, and I have to agree. But...well, we won't go into that now. I am choosing for my own pleasure and for the pleasure this oral library would give my hearers. Children come first, and I certainly wouldn't inflict *The Magic Mountain* or *War and Peace* on them, so how about Robert Louis Stevenson and *Treasure Island*? And then Kenneth Grahame and *The Wind in the Willows*. After that Evelyn Waugh's *Decline and Fall*, which I first read at school when I was 10 in 1938; P. G. Wodehouse's *Galahad at Blandings*; Boris Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago*; F. Dostoevski's *The Possessed*, or as it's been recently called, *The Demons*.

It's difficult to make a choice like this, because one knows that other authors are involved and one doesn't want to duplicate books. It is even more difficult to justify one's choice, but *Dr. Zhivago* and *The Possessed* are there because the latter, based as it is on historical fact (the Nechaev case), is the best novel I know on nihilism and its destructive potential. It includes *Dr. Zhivago* partly because I took it with me to read in prison when I was deported from South Africa in 1961, because it is the most civilized account of the effect of ideological civil war on individuals and is in itself an example of dissent in literature. But in the end one makes choices for personal reasons. I just hope mine make some sense to the reader.



Lech Walesa
Polish Solidarity leader

The two literary works most worth preserving for future generations are the Holy Scriptures and *Quo Vadis* by Henrik Sienkiewicz.



Robert Nisbet
Sociologist and author of *The Quest for Community, History of the Idea of Progress*, &c.

Confucius, in whatever single volume gives us the essentials of the greatest system of moral philosophy yet achieved by man, as steeped in social realism as idealism and as pertinent today as when it was created in the sixth century B.C.; St. Benedict's *The Rule*—it is a guide to the proper ordering of human groups, a multiplicity of which will be necessary to rescue mankind from cultural devastation; Francis Bacon's *The New Learning*—it is the most eloquent and profound prophylaxis against superstitions ever written, particularly those in the forms of entelechies, dialectics, and the like that flourish in the minds of Hegelians, Marxians, and Freudians; Shakespeare's *Sonnets*—these will be sufficient to remind any age without genuine poetry, such as our own today, of what the essence of poetry is,

now and forever more; the Constitution of the United States and *The Federalist Papers*—these remain what they have been for two centuries: the most practical and evocative portrayals of freedom and order within the political state ever written; Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*—to keep alive the precious, indispensable spirit of fancy and humor.

Finally, I offer two more, briefly, to serve as inducements to sleep when sleeping pills run low: the works of Hegel and of Herbert Spencer. Infallible!

Tibor Machan

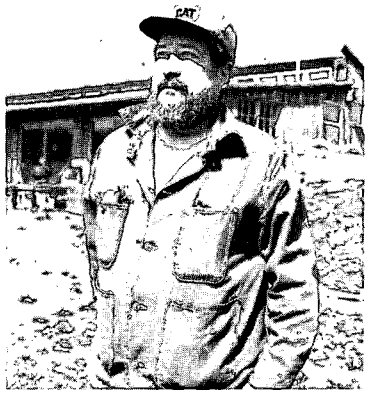
Philosopher and author, *Human Rights and Human Liberties*, &c.

I would preserve Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*—the ethics of good sense, and my first book in philosophy; John Locke's *Second Treatise on Government*—the best sense in politics among the classics; Karl Marx's *Grundrisse*—Marx as he would have liked to say it elsewhere, with no holds barred; Ayn Rand's *Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal* and *We the Living*—Rand for adults!; David L. Norton's *Personal Destinies*—the best in contemporary ethics by far; Stanley Cavell's *Must We Mean What We Say?*—the cream of the crop of the analytic philosophy, which is by no means all bad; Montaigne's *Essays*—the best common sense within classical essay writing; Ludwig Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*—the real dope on religion (don't underestimate the stuff).

George Gilder

Author, *Wealth and Poverty, Men and Marriage*, &c.

Herewith my list: Richard Feynman's *Lectures on Physics*—lucid, readable, and profound exposition of the paramount news of the 20th century; Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*—an encyclopedia of libertarian wisdom, eloquence, and indignation, espoused in the best novel since *War and Peace*; the Bible—contains the higher realm of wisdom that Rand glimpses in her tributes to reason and to faith in a "benevolent universe" but presumptuously denies in her philosophy; John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*—has got it all, from Vanity Fair to the Delectable Mountains, and is the unacknowledged source of much subsequent literature; Jude Wanniski's *The Way the World Works*—he captures more of the essence of economics than any other writer; Paul Johnson's *Modern Times*—the tale of 20th-century follies and fantasies and an antidote to Wanniski's political excesses.



Karl Hess

Editor of the *Libertarian Party News* and former speechwriter for Sen. Barry Goldwater

Assuming (reasonably, I believe) that my liberty-loving friends would choose to "become" the great classics of politics and philosophy, I would delight in becoming a shelf of most mundane but, to me, exciting and survival-enhancing books. My first choice would be Euclid's *Elements*, to assure the survival of essential skills of mensuration and of that elegant, linear thinking that has led us to important aspects of the scientific method. I feel that with the *Elements* available to us, we would have a wonderful head start toward rebuilding a devastated or despotic world. To add reading good enough to occupy us around a campfire, as well as knowledge of another indispensable tool of civilization, I would become W. W. Sawyer's *Mathematician's Delight*.

Next I would memorize in every detail that classic of survivalism, the U.S. Army's field manual 21-76, *Survival, Evasion, and Escape*. The reason is straightforward. In order for our collection of books to survive, the people who have memorized them will have to survive, and this small, useful book would help immensely in that enterprise.

Should it seem prudent occasionally to dispatch, as well as evade, the agents of tyranny, I can think of nothing better to memorize than *Yank*, Levy's terrible little book on hand-to-hand combat prepared for the British Army at the outset of the Second World War. And because the enterprise is likely to be perilous under any circumstance, and also could include the birthing of babies, I would become the most rough-and-ready book of bone-setting, wound-tending, and general emergency treatment available: *The Ship's Medicine Chest*, published for the Merchant Marine by the Public Health Service.

For similarly practical reasons I would become standard, basic textbooks in biology, botany, chemistry, and mineralogy. Rodale Press's classic *Encyclopedia of Organic Gardening* would be memorized in this same line-up. All of these would help build a solid material base for our remnant of a free society, preserving knowledge as indispensable to the human condition as its poems and metaphysics.

And if I felt need to become just one unrelated volume to keep the spirit of resistance, individualism, and self-reliance poetically and vibrantly alive with the American accents that are dear to me, I would become Thoreau's *Walden* and his *Essay on Civil Disobedience*. There might even be times when I would recite, for an appropriate audience, sections of my combat lore and the disobedience essay antiphonically. What a sound to upset a tyrant! ◧

Neocons Vs. Eurowimps

by Christopher Layne

How NATO Weakens the West
by Melvyn Krauss

New York: Macmillan, 480 pages, $25.00

"What's wrong with NATO?" is a question asked with increasing frequency in foreign-policy circles on both sides of the Atlantic. In *How NATO Weakens the West,* Melvyn Krauss offers the neoconservatives' answer to the question of what ails the Alliance: Western Europe lacks the political will to stand up to the Soviet Union, hence NATO is an impediment to the neoconservatives' goal of launching America on an ideological crusade against Soviet communism.

Krauss argues that Western Europe free rides for its security on America's nuclear deterrent so it won't have to divert money from welfare-state programs to build up the large conventional forces needed to reduce NATO's dangerous reliance on early use of nuclear weapons. But the Europeans lack confidence in the reliability of the U.S. nuclear guarantee. Their concern is well founded: given the prevailing strategic nuclear parity between the superpowers, Washington's threat to risk nuclear war in Europe's defense is not credible. Therefore the Europeans, to ensure their security, turn to détente, which Krauss describes as a policy of bribing the Soviets to refrain from invading Western Europe. "Détente," says Krauss, "allows Europe to keep its conventional defense spending low and its welfare spending high, and still feel safe vis-à-vis the Soviets despite the onset of U.S.-Soviet nuclear parity."

Western Europe's détente policy undercuts the neoconservatives' hard-line Soviet policy by giving Moscow access to militarily useful high technology and allowing the Kremlin to divert to defense purposes economic resources that otherwise would be committed to the civilian sector. This results in what Krauss calls the "defense feedback effect": America "must spend more on its own defense because the Europeans are adding resources to the Soviet war machine."

Neoconservatives want the United States to force Western Europe to fall into line with Washington's tough anti-Soviet policies by withdrawing from NATO if the Europeans remain recalcitrant. They argue that American concern with maintaining the Alliance's cohesion is misplaced, because it gives the Europeans leverage to force the United States to take a soft line toward Moscow. "An unintended and unfortunate consequence of the American attachment to Atlantic unity is to give the Europeans license to disregard U.S. interests," Krauss maintains. "If the United States protests Europe's policies, the doctrine of Atlantic unity is waved in American faces by a coalition of European and U.S. 'Atlanticists' who claim the U.S. needs Europe at least as much as Europe needs the United States."

Neoconservatives believe the Europeans need America far more than the United States needs them. Therefore Washington should, Krauss argues, pursue its own interests unilaterally. If this leads to NATO's collapse, so be it. There is no benefit in the Alliance if Western Europe compels the United States to give up its "Star Wars" defense initiative, make arms-control concessions, and abandon anti-Soviet "freedom fighters" in the Third World.

How NATO Weakens the West is highly uneven. Krauss is very good at identifying the points of friction in Atlantic relations, and his book is important because it articulates the frustrations with NATO felt by a growing number of Americans. But he abjures a scholarly and reasoned approach for a polemical and superficial one. He thus fails to understand the underlying causes of intra-Alliance tensions and their longer-term implications for American foreign policy. Neoconservatives do not like Europeans—whom they regard as pacifistic "Eurowimps" hopelessly addicted to welfare-state socialism—and they believe Western Europe has no right to define its interests in a way that conflicts with the neoconservative vision of American foreign policy.

Obviously, Western European and American policies often differ sharply. One need not agree with those policies to recognize that there are good reasons—historical, geographical, strategic, and political—why Europe is different from the United States. For example, neoconservatives do not conceal their disdain for Europe's welfare states, which they believe undermine European defense efforts. But nations rent by bitter class antagonism are generally inhibited from pursuing strong foreign policies—as were Britain and France during the 1930s. By fostering domestic political and social cohesion, the welfare state may have made Western Europe stronger, not weaker, as the neoconservatives maintain.

Similarly, West Germany favors a low nuclear threshold not because it is obsessed with maintaining a high level of welfare-state benefits but because it is obsessed with deterring war. Since West Germany would be the battlefield, *any* war in Europe—whether nuclear or conventional—would be catastrophic. The West German government believes war is more likely to be avoided by a strategy of nuclear deterrence (provided by the United States) than by one of conventional defense.

Finally, it is easy to see why West Germany is so strongly committed to détente. Unlike the United States, the Germans (and other West Europeans) have reaped

tangible benefits from détente, both economically and in terms of increased human contacts with Eastern Europe. Moreover, Americans persistently discount the degree to which West German foreign-policy elites are committed to *Ostpolitik* and thus to resolving the German national question. Relaxation of tensions in Europe allows West Germany to seek close intra-German relations, and the West Germans hope to institutionalize divisible détente by drawing Moscow into a web of cooperative political and economic relations. But détente in Europe is linked to the climate of superpower relations. Hence West Germany opposes American policies—in the Third World and on arms control—that heighten tensions between Moscow and Washington and thus chill détente in Europe.

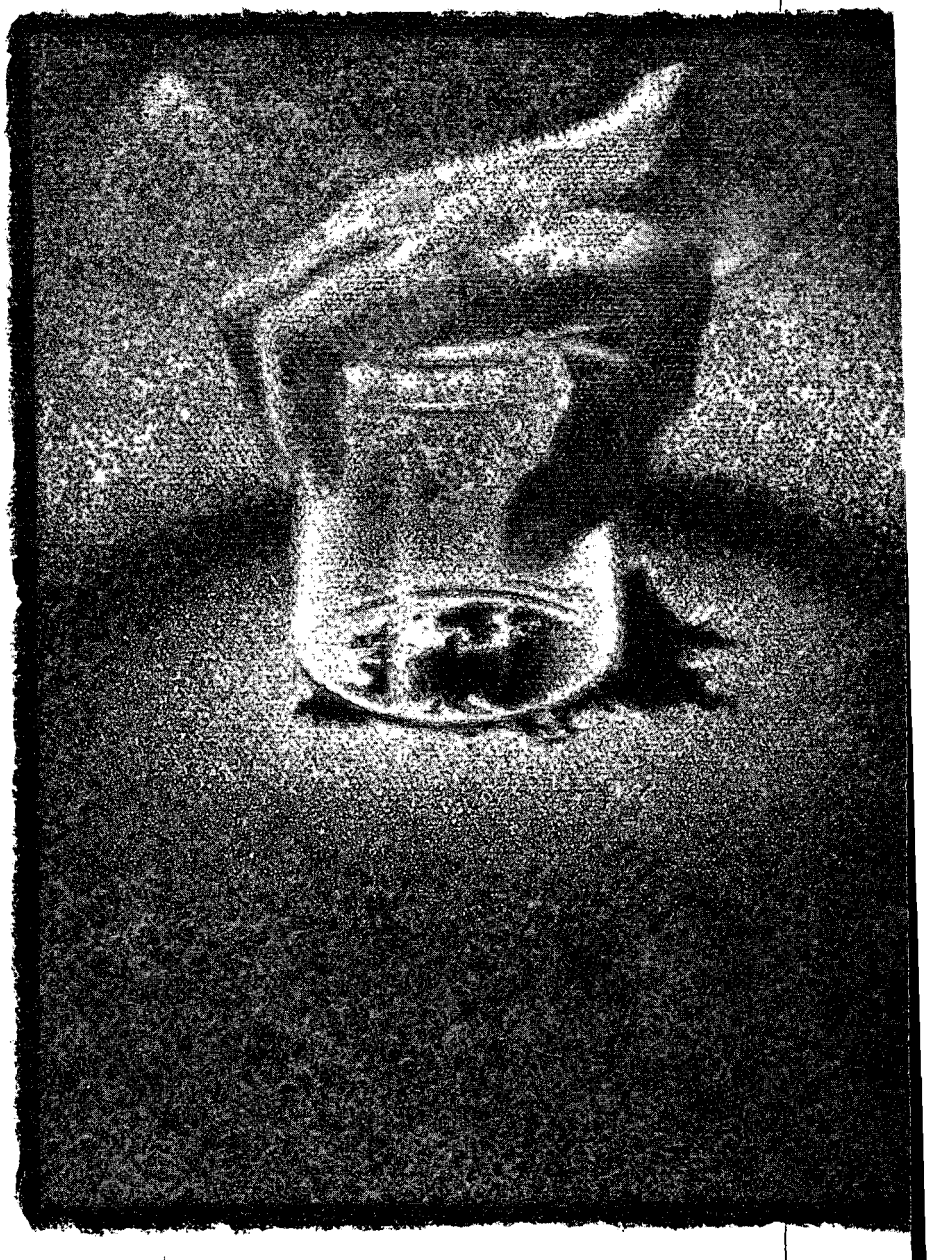
American and Western European interests *are* different. That is why NATO is in trouble. Maintaining the present structure of Atlantic relations makes matters worse by perpetuating Western Europe's anachronistic and humiliating dependence on the United States. In such an imbalanced relationship, Washington expects Western Europe to support U.S. policies and Europe is pressured to conform. But the Europeans resent pressure to follow policies they regard as counter to their own interests. This resentment fans the anti-American and neutralist sentiments already rampant in Europe. On the other hand, Europe's recalcitrance illustrates the reality that NATO is actually a unilateral American guarantee of Europe's security—not an alliance with reciprocal obligations. With increasing frequency, Americans ask why they should bear the nuclear risks and economic costs of such a one-sided relationship.

Atlantic relations will be stable only when America and Western Europe are on an equal footing, which requires that Europe be able to defend itself. Yet it is not likely that any fundamental reordering of strategic responsibilities will occur within the Alliance's structured framework. Only when America no longer is the ultimate guarantor of Western Europe's security will the Europeans have an incentive to transform their strategic defense potential into actual self-defense capability.

The growing rift between America and Western Europe suggests that Atlantic relations are headed for major change—either an amicable separation or a bitter divorce. It is cause for concern that the loudest voices in the debate about NATO's future belong to European leftists who dislike the United States and to American neoconservatives who hold Europe beneath contempt. Their trans-Atlantic antipathy is mutually reinforcing and is pushing the Alliance to a nasty breakup that will benefit only Moscow.

Passion can never be entirely divorced from politics, but wise policies are not made in the heat of emotion. The United States still has important interests in Europe and cannot simply walk away from NATO. Yet in the long run, the Atlantic Community can be preserved only by transcending the structure of the Atlantic Alliance. Washington must begin to move toward a gradual withdrawal from the Alliance and a devolution to Western Europe of full responsibility for its own defense.

Krauss and other neoconservatives profess to support devolution in the belief that Western Europe on its own would abandon détente and take a harder anti-Soviet line. This is wishful thinking. Devolution is in America's interests but comes with a price tag that neoconservatives fail to see. An independent Western Europe will be less, not more, likely to follow America's lead.



It was inevitable that as it recovered from the effects of World War II, Western Europe grew restless under Washington's Atlantic hegemony and began to chart an independent course in world politics. Western Europe's strategic independence would remove the last inhibition that restrains it from clashing even more sharply with Washington on sensitive policy questions. Moreover, the emergence of a militarily independent Western Europe would be a major step in transforming the international system from bipolarity to multipolarity. The inexorable consequence of multipolarity is enhanced political and economic rivalry between the United States and the emerging new powers—in this case, Western Europe—and a corresponding diminution of America's ability to influence international outcomes.

The price of multipolarity is high but nevertheless is worth paying if it enables America to escape the nuclear peril and strategic overextension imposed by NATO. And on those occasions the Atlantic Community would be

stronger, because neither America nor Europe would have false expectations about the other's behavior. Americans, even neoconservatives, would have no legitimate basis for objecting to the policies of a militarily independent Western Europe. And when they do cooperate with Washington, Europeans will know that collaboration results from the voluntary choice of equal partners, not the imposed *diktat* of a hegemonic power.

In coming years, the future of the triangular U.S.-Europe-USSR relationship may be the most important item on America's foreign-policy agenda. Making a successful transition from an Atlantic to a post-Alliance world will not be easy; the possibility of disaster can never be discounted. Success depends on thoughtful planning, empathy for European interests, and wise statesmanship. But if Melvyn Krauss's *How NATO Weakens the West* is indicative, America's neoconservative foreign-policy elite is not prepared to exercise the kind of leadership required to bring about an orderly transformation of Atlantic relations.

Christopher Layne, a Los Angeles attorney, served during 1984 as the NATO / Western Europe analyst at the U.S. Army's Arroyo Center think tank. He has written extensively about foreign-policy issues in Foreign Policy, Orbis, The New Republic, *and various newspapers.*

It's No Sin to Like Vonnegut

by Jeff Riggenbach

Galapagos
by Kurt Vonnegut
New York: Simon & Schuster, 304 pages, $17.95

The facts of Kurt Vonnegut's literary career have been well publicized, but they bear repeating nonetheless, for they have been consistently, even perversely, misunderstood. Vonnegut was born in Indianapolis in 1922, the son of a well-known architect. He attended Cornell and the University of Chicago, where he earned a degree in anthropology. Then, like Ronald Reagan (and at around the same time), he took a job doing public relations for General Electric.

Meanwhile, nights and weekends, he wrote. He had no trouble getting into print. His short stories began appearing in major magazines like *Collier's* and *The Saturday Evening Post* within the first year of his free-lancing career. His first novel, *Player Piano*, was brought out in hardcover by a major publishing house (Scribner's) in 1952.

But his early novels didn't sell. Fifteen years later they would sell like hotcakes, but in the early 1950s they could find few enthusiastic readers. It wasn't long before Vonnegut was reduced to selling his novels for paltry flat fees—surrendering all rights and royalties and seeing them appear, unreviewed and unadvertised, in paperback originals.

Then times changed. Those paperback originals began finding readers and gradually became underground classics. A Vonnegut cult began forming on the nation's campuses. Finally, in 1969, one of Vonnegut's lesser works, a book called *Slaughterhouse Five*, which combined science fiction with a firsthand memoir of the Allied bombing of Dresden during World War II, won establishment acclaim and became a bestseller. Overnight, Kurt Vonnegut became a major American writer.

Since then, in qualitative terms, his production has fallen off somewhat. To put the matter bluntly, nothing Vonnegut has written in the past 15 years, up to now, has even approached his best work of the 1960s. *Cat's Cradle* and *Mother Night* remain his finest and most characteristic works.

The apparent decline in his powers has not gone unnoticed, of course. Critical opinion has turned resolutely, even hysterically, against him. More than a few of the mainstream literary intellectuals who hailed the freshness of Kurt Vonnegut's genius back in 1969 have since recanted and admitted publicly that they'd been wrong all along: it wasn't only Vonnegut's recent books that were second-rate, all of his books were second rate, he never really had been any good to begin with.

And I have to confess that they almost had me persuaded. At least, they'd shaken my confidence. I'd begun to feel almost as though I had to apologize to the arbiters of literary excellence for the sin of liking Kurt Vonnegut. I should have gone back and reread *Cat's Cradle* or *Mother Night*, but I didn't.

That's why *Galapagos* comes as such an extraordinarily pleasant surprise. It's as good as anything Vonnegut has ever written. It is triumphant proof that he has not lost his touch.

The narrator of *Galapagos* is Leon Trout, son of Kilgore Trout, the hack science-fiction writer who figured in a number of Vonnegut's previous novels. Leon is a Vietnam-era deserter who flees to Sweden, becomes a citizen of that nation, settles down, and takes a job at the local shipyard. One day, while working on the construction of a new luxury ocean liner, the *Bahia de Darwin*, he is killed by a falling sheet of steel.

But he refuses "to set foot in the blue tunnel leading into the Afterlife." His "curiosity as to what life is all about" has not yet been satisfied.

Instead he continues to hang around the shipyard, observing what goes on in his absence. He sees the ship finished, sees it set out for South America, where it is scheduled to pick up a boatload of international celebrities and jetsetters and take them on "the Nature Cruise of the Century" to the Galapagos Islands, and resolves to go on the cruise himself, ghost though he is, to learn whatever it may have

to teach him concerning what life is all about.

By the time he and the ship arrive in Ecuador, however, the cruise has been called off, due to the impending economic and political collapse of much of the world. Only a handful of passengers, none of them celebrities, have made their way to the seaside hotel from which the cruise had been set to depart. Not all of them will survive the collapse of civilization, but those who do will in fact travel to the Galapagos aboard the *Bahia de Darwin* just as they had planned to do. They will not be traveling on a nature cruise, however. They will be fleeing the collapse of civilization.

As their damaged ship approaches the fabled islands, Leon sees the blue tunnel once again, hovering in midair, beckoning to him. And in the mouth of the tunnel, bent on luring Leon to set foot in it at last, is none other than his late father, Kilgore Trout. The elder Trout, whose name bears a suspicious resemblance to the name of another late science-fiction author, one Theodore Sturgeon, attempts to tell his son what he wants to know—what life is all about. But his explanation bears less resemblance to the philosophy of Theodore Sturgeon than to the philosophy of Kurt Vonnegut.

"Leon! Leon! Leon!" he cries out. "The more you learn about people, the more disgusted you'll become. I would have thought that your being sent by the wisest men in your country, supposedly, to fight a nearly endless, thankless, horrifying, and, finally, pointless war, would have given you sufficient insight into the nature of humanity to last you throughout all eternity!

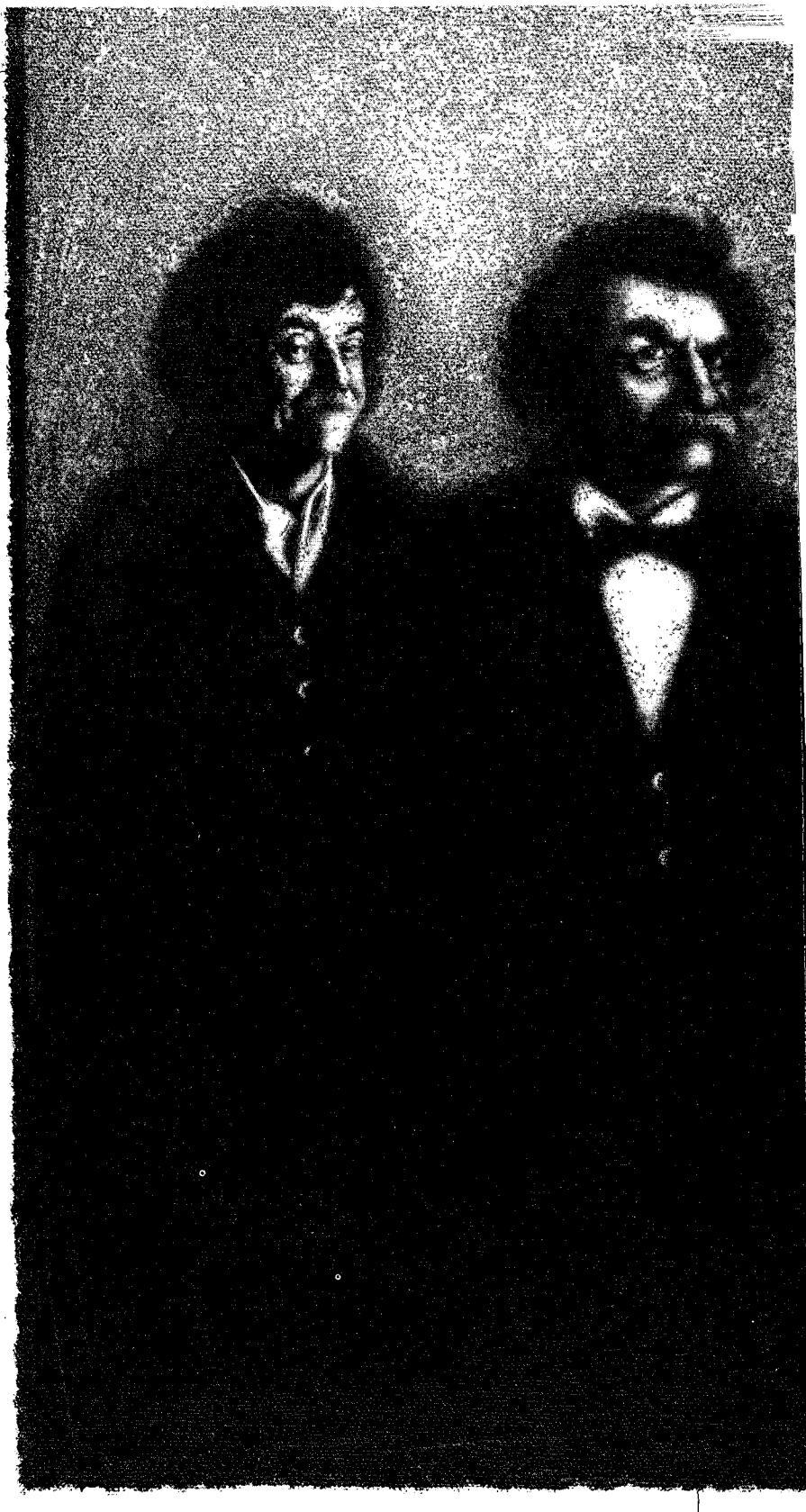
"Need I tell you that these same wonderful animals, of which you apparently still want to learn more and more, are at this very moment proud as Punch to have weapons in place, all set to go at a moment's notice, guaranteed to kill everything?

"Need I tell you that this once beautiful and nourishing planet when viewed from the air now resembles...diseased organs...and that the apparent cancers, growing for the sake of growth alone, and consuming all and poisoning all, are the cities of your beloved human beings?

"Need I tell you that these animals have made such a botch of things that they can no longer imagine decent lives for their own grandchildren, even, and will consider it a miracle if there is anything left to eat or enjoy by the year two thousand, now only fourteen years away?"

If he doesn't give up his foolish quest now and enter the Afterlife, Kilgore Trout tells his son, he won't have another chance for a million years. But Leon is unconvinced. He stays. And over the next million years, he at last satisfies his curiosity. He watches as humanity starts all over from the small colony on the Galapagos and evolves gradually into an aquatic species with much smaller brains than the old-style humans used to have. In Leon's view, this is a good thing, for he feels that it was mankind's oversize brains —larger and cleverer than they really needed to be for purposes of survival—that got the old-style humans into such grievous trouble in the first place.

It may be difficult to imagine such a fable as this being entertaining, but entertaining it is nevertheless—marvelously entertaining and at times hysterically funny. In this sense, reading Kurt Vonnegut is not unlike reading Mark Twain. Twain too was a pessimist and a misanthrope, the author not only of boyhood idylls like *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, but also of dark, brooding works like *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, in which he observes that "if you take in a starving dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you," and that "this is the principal difference between a dog and man."



As it happens, I had been rereading Mark Twain just before sitting down with Kurt Vonnegut's latest novel, and this chance juxtaposition made the altogether extraordinary similarities between the two writers impossible to ignore. Vonnegut is regarded these days by the high muck-

ety-mucks of the literary world—they who have made major figures out of such mediocrities and nonentities as Saul Bellow, Walker Percy, and Philip Roth—as a vulgarian, a cheap anti-intellectual buffoon, and a "mere popular entertainer." Twain too was so regarded in his own time.

Vonnegut is widely thought of as unsuitable for children, and his books are always being forcibly removed from school libraries by bluenoses and busybodies. Twain met a similar fate in his own lifetime and continues to do so to this day.

Vonnegut, as the foregoing quotations on the afterlife attest, is skeptical and irreverent in his attitude toward religion. So, to the everlasting sorrow of his devout wife, Livy, was Mark Twain.

Both Vonnegut and Twain are drawn powerfully to the fantastic as a means of expressing their ideas. In Twain's case, this passion is most evident in his later works—in books like *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* and *The Mysterious Stranger*. In Vonnegut's case, it has been evident since the very beginning of his career.

Both Vonnegut and Twain stand for a disrespectful if not downright subversive attitude toward those who like to give orders and run other people's lives for them.

Both Vonnegut and Twain are masters of a deceptively simple prose style, which, in each case, evolved from an early involvement in journalism. Dixon Webster wrote of Twain nearly half a century ago that by the end of his career he had "perfected his early journalistic manner until it became one of the great styles of American letters—easy, incisive, sensitive to nuances of dialect, rich in the resources of comedy, satire, irony, and corrosive anger." The same could be said of Kurt Vonnegut—and in identical words. In fact, with his mop of unruly hair and his bushy mustache, Vonnegut even *looks* a little like Mark Twain.

But more important than any of these similarities is a fundamental similarity of outlook, especially when it comes to political and quasi-political matters. Both Vonnegut and Twain stand for thumbing one's nose at authority, for a disrespectful if not downright subversive attitude toward those who like to give orders and run other people's lives for them.

"My kind of loyalty," Twain wrote in *A Connecticut Yankee*, is "loyalty to one's country, not to its institutions or its office-holders. The country is the real thing, the substantial thing, the eternal thing; it is the thing to watch over, and care for, and be loyal to; institutions are extraneous, they are its mere clothing, and clothing can wear out, become ragged, cease to be comfortable, cease to protect the body from winter, disease and death. To be loyal to rags, to shout for rags, to worship rags, to die for rags—that is a loyalty of unreason, it is pure animal; it belongs to monarchy, was invented by monarchy; let monarchy keep it."

For one official American institution, Twain harbored particular contempt. There is, he opined, "no distinctly American criminal class except Congress."

As for Kurt Vonnegut, one of his most perceptive critics, James Lundquist, argues that like most midwestern writers, Vonnegut affirms in his fiction such values as "individualism, self-reliance, a practical materialism, skepticism of custom and tradition unless rooted in common sense, political intransience, and isolationism."

The isolationism, and a concomitant antimilitarism, go back a long way with Vonnegut. "I was taught that we had a standing army of just over a hundred thousand men and that the generals had nothing to say about what was done in Washington. I was taught to be proud of that and to pity Europe for having more than a million men under arms and spending all their money on airplanes and tanks. I simply never unlearned junior civics. I still believe in it. I got a very good grade."

That was in the early 1930s. A decade later, as a columnist for the *Cornell Daily Sun*, he was passionately defending the isolationism of Charles Lindbergh, who was being publicly vilified because of his opposition to U.S. entry into World War II. Two decades after that, he was attracting nationwide attention as one of the most articulate opponents of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam war.

Vonnegut, like Twain, is an intuitive individualist and opponent of state power. But because his views are based more on intuition than on any sort of systematic reflection, it is easy enough to catch him taking positions that are inconsistent with the main thrust of his political thinking. Just as Twain, the disparager of institutions and lawmakers, put himself on record at least once as being a socialist, so Vonnegut, the champion of self-reliance and isolationism, regards himself these days as a leftist and contributes regularly to the left-liberal *Nation* magazine.

Neither Twain nor Vonnegut is really a leftist, however, any more than most of the hippies and antiwar protesters of two decades ago were leftists. It is no accident that Vonnegut began enjoying his first really major success during the 1960s, for it was precisely the implicit but unmistakable individualism in his books that made them appeal to a strongly individualistic generation of students and cultural radicals. And despite the best efforts to give misleading signals, through periodicals like *The Nation*, as to where his true political sympathies lie, Kurt Vonnegut's continuing phenomenal popularity is all the verification one should need that the baby boom generation is still out there, iconoclastic and individualistic as ever.

Contributing editor Jeff Riggenbach is an editorial writer and columnist for the Orange County (Calif.) Register.

Public Keynes, Private Keynes

by Elizabeth Johnson

John Maynard Keynes: Hopes Betrayed (1883-1920)
by Robert Skidelsky
New York: Delacorte, 295 pages, $16.95

John Maynard Keynes died in 1946, his name a household word to a generation that looked to economics to build a brave new postwar world. The official biography, written in hero-worshipping style by R. F. Harrod, appeared in 1951 and has stood for 30 years. In 1967, however, Michael Holroyd published his life of Lytton Strachey with its revelation of Keynes's early homosexuality, scandalizing earnest economists unused to such vagaries on the part of their intellectual heroes.

This released a spate of letters, diaries, and memoirs pertaining to the tangled lives and loves of the Bloomsbury group, Keynes's intimate friends—a stream that kept up through the '70s until it seemed that every tiff endured by the most minor member was chronicled. At the same time, the Royal Economic Society's vast memorial, the 30-volume edition of Keynes's *Collected Writings*, arrived tome by tome as the British Public Record Office released its files, university libraries got around to cataloguing their holdings, and more and more papers kept turning up—even in such unlikely containers as a laundry basket.

Never, publicly and privately, was a hero so documented! And few personages have lived such a many-faceted life. Keynes was not only the academic economist whose general theory set the framework for discussion of his subject for years to come. He was also a most persuasive publicist of his own ideas, a practical financier who made a fortune on the stock exchange, a self-sacrificing civil servant in two world wars, a charmer who hobnobbed with the great and near-great, and a generously supportive and loving friend to the artists and writers of Bloomsbury. Clearly, a most fascinating subject for biography.

Some economists, of course, have objected that all this has nothing to do with Keynes's economics and in particular have dismissed his homosexuality, as Harrod did privately, as a youthful aberration. After all, they could say, Keynes ended up idyllically married to the fascinating Russian ballerina Lydia Lopokova. Robert Skidelsky, however, believes that all the formative elements that shaped Keynes's early life were of the greatest importance to his economics. In the first volume of his biography, *Hopes Betrayed (1883-1920)*, published in England in 1983 and now issued in the United States, he succeeds brilliantly in establishing his thesis.

Skidelsky, a historian who is professor of international relations at the University of Warwick, admits that his task is a daunting one. In addition to the wealth of published material, there was still an unexploited store of unpublished records—the carefully kept letters and diaries and school reports and essays that the Victorians put by for posterity. From such records, Skidelsky draws a particularly sensitive portrait of the logician John Neville Keynes, a diffident, supremely cautious man who seemed to focus all his ambition upon his clever son.

Skidelsky is also especially good in depicting the Cambridge intellectual background. Questioning the existence of God (and living cheek by jowl with Darwin), the Cambridge moral philosophers were struggling to reconcile the aims of the individual with the good of society as a whole—a problem for the economists Marshall and Pigou as well as the philosophers. Their dilemma is what made the teaching of philosopher G. E. Moore so attractive to Keynes and his friends, who were members of the exclusive discussion group known as the Apostles. It seemed to them that Moore provided a rational justification for believing love and friendship and the personal loyalties they most esteemed to have more value than the duties thought useful to society.

This tension between the public and the private at this stage of Keynes's life is the hub of the book. The Apostles made love the most important object in life, linking it with the beautiful, and in the male-dominated world of the university sought the delights of what they liked to refer to as the Higher Sodomy. This was a challenge to established authority, at that time involving serious risk of blackmail or imprisonment. Yet Keynes himself flourished in orthodox circles. He maintained a close and affectionate relationship with his parents, was popular and won all the prizes at Eton, earned the unstinting approval of his superiors at every job he undertook, and was hunted down by every lionizing hostess.

Via his early philosophical study of probability, Keynes discovered an interest in statistics and his bent for the practical problems of economics. When war broke out in 1914 he did not rest—utterly confident in his own ability—until he got himself a place in the British Treasury. There, his efficiency and resourcefulness immediately made him noticed. The London hostesses picked him up as well, and in no time at all he was weekending with the prime minister.

Meantime, the war was bogging down in the trenches, and Britain's volunteer army had to be replaced with conscripted recruits. Keynes's friends—his lover Duncan Grant and Lytton Strachey and other members of the Bloomsbury group—were conscientious objectors and passionate critics of the government. Keynes himself was both critical of the government's manpower policy and an objector to its preemption of his personal right to decide whether to enlist. He seriously considered resigning from the Treasury. His protest on his own behalf was swept

aside by the official view of the importance of his work to the war effort and indeed got rather lost in his genuine pleasure in the virtuosity of his performance.

He stayed on, testifying to the validity of his friends' scruples and maneuvering to get them settled as farmworkers. But Skidelsky effectively makes much of the strain created for a man whose public self could manage with aplomb all of Britain's inter-allied finance (and that before he was 35) and whose private self was being needled by those he loved best as to his rightness in contributing to a cause so morally wrong.

Keynes thus went to the Paris Peace Conference not only with a "grand" scheme for the rehabilitation of Europe in his pocket but with a load of guilt as well. His grand scheme was turned down, and he was appalled to see the defeated nations saddled with debts beyond reason. Frustrated and overworked, he resigned from the Treasury to distill his anger in writing *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, published in 1919. The historical sweep of the book, with its searing portraits of Lloyd George, Wilson, and Clemenceau, and its clear address to the practical problem of a devastated and starving Europe, made it a bestseller overnight. *Hopes Betrayed* closes with the reaction of public and critics and with Keynes launched on a career as a publicist. Economics apart, a great deal of his life was spent as teacher and preacher, urging the British to use their brains. (*Keynes* rhymed with *brains*, he was fond of reminding.)

Keynes was a man of many contradictions. Skidelsky makes them intellectually and humanly understandable and has produced an important and wonderfully readable biography. It is tempting to speculate on what his conclusions will be in volume two concerning the influence of Keynes's early beliefs on his later development away from economic orthodoxy. That they will be lucid, convincing, and enjoyable to read, we may be sure.

Elizabeth Johnson is the editor of four volumes of The Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes *and the author, with Harry G. Johnson, of* The Shadow of Keynes.

Are Diamonds Forever, and Other Conundrums of Modern Physics

by Gregory Benford

The Second Creation: Makers of the Revolution in 20th Century Physics
by Robert P. Crease and Charles C. Mann

New York: Elizabeth Sifton Books/Viking, 447 pages, $24.95

If physics can be said to have a Holy Grail, it is Unification. Physicists have always felt the impulse to knit up the world with a single, simple, elegant thread. In *The Second Creation*, one of the year's most widely acclaimed science books, Robert Crease and Charles Mann adroitly depict both the abstruse and the human side of modern particle physics, blending lucid description with gossipy verve.

Unification seeks a "theory of everything"—why matter has its present form and why the universe is as we find it. "Newton's recognition that the force that made apples fall was identical to the force that kept the earth in its orbit was a Unification, as was the approximately contemporaneous realization that lightning, static electricity, and St. Elmo's fire were all manifestations of one phenomenon: electricity." Later, James Clerk Maxwell showed that oscillating electrical and magnetic fields in wires radiate waves with precisely the speed of light. This unified circuitry with the light spectrum we see, two seemingly different phenomena.

Lofty aims do not rule out a warts-and-all attention to how physicists work. The book abounds in tales of intense rivalry, cutting criticism, and rueful failure. There were even cases of physicists announcing results first in the *New York Times*, only to have them disproved shortly afterward, before they were published in scientific journals. As science writer Freeman Dyson has said, "The ground of physics is littered with the corpses of unified theories." Einstein, for example, ruminated on a theory that would unite gravity with particle physics, following a blind alley during his final decades.

Crease and Mann are able to pick their way through the thicket of abstractions by perceptive, well-timed analogies and visual pictures. They report the many spectacular failures of the last century along with the triumphs, never neglecting the delicious gossip: "Heisenberg launched...a unified field theory that started as a collaboration with Pauli. When Pauli withdrew, Heisenberg claimed during a radio broadcast in February 1958 that a unified Heisenberg-Pauli theory was imminent, and only a few small technicalities remained to be worked out....Pauli responded by mailing his friends a letter consisting of a blank rectangle, drawn in pencil, with the caption, 'This is to show the world that I can paint like Titian. Only technical details are missing.' "

Yet alongside the failures came great progress in the past 20 years. Electromagnetism was unified with the nuclear weak interaction, showing them to be two faces of the same coin. Now the quest pushes on to higher-energy particles, which means that the implications for cosmology reach further back in time, to when the universe was compact and far hotter. This is truly the final problem, though it deals with initial instants, when "matter and energy were one...at the dawn of time, in the ravening fire of the Big Bang. Thus the phenomena physicists now seek to describe existed only at unimaginable energies that can never be reproduced in the laboratory. Experiment conse-

quently seems almost hopeless."

This does not, however, deter the particle physics community from pressing for a new, giant accelerator to push on to still higher energies. The Superconducting Collider would use superconducting magnets to ram beams of particles into each other. This accelerator would be 50 miles in circumference and cost about $4 billion—a huge fraction of today's science budget.

The physics community seems divided about the utility of this machine and whether it would in fact settle any truly fundamental issues. The major budget battle in the scientific community now looming is competition between a Superconducting Collider and funding for a space station. In a way, it is a contest between two different frontiers of discovery.

While space is an infinite frontier, the prospect of a final Unification may close the heroic era of particle physics. As long ago as the 1920s, theorists forecast "the end of physics as we know it within six months." Many hold that a complete theory would mean that science would continue, but "all of the fundamental questions that physics can pose would have been answered, and our knowledge of force and matter would henceforth change only in particulars and not in outline."

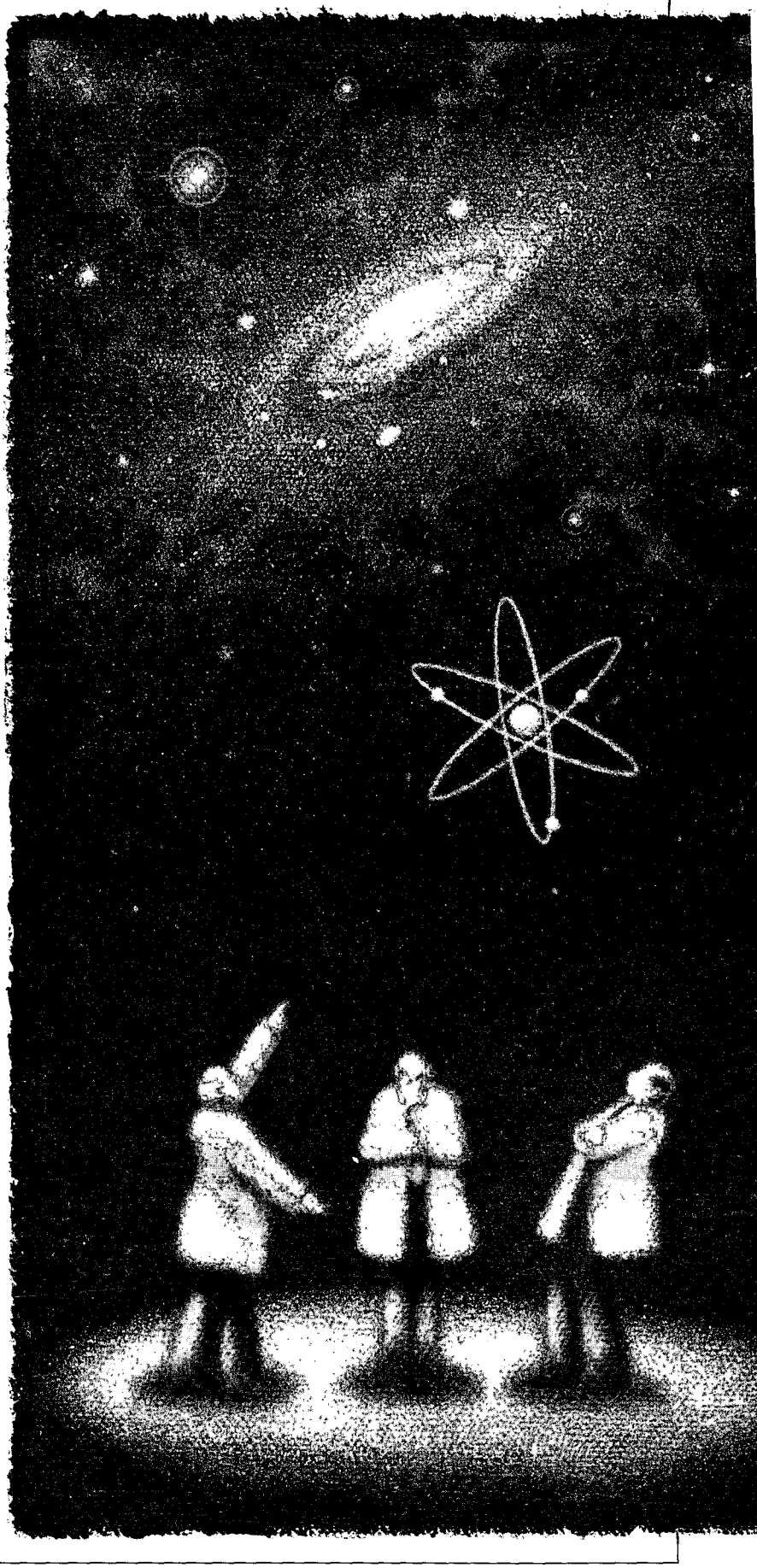
Such hubris will probably go untested, because there are serious doubts about whether we can ever do experiments at high enough energy, or observations of the large-scale universe in enough detail, to ever confirm or deny the candidate unified theories. Once the supreme empirical science, physics could then become mere "recreational mathematical theology," telling us in the end more about ourselves than it does about nature.

What is more, this book is shaped toward a special definition of what is fundamental. Basically, it holds that once we know the forces between particles, and find a mathematical expression that generates their properties from some general assumptions, the program of physics is over.

Yet many profound philosophical questions stem from the gritty particulars of the universe, not just the building blocks. (Is life an unavoidable outcome of complicated processes? How prevalent is it? Does intelligence inevitably arise?) It is as though a gourmet maintained that what matters in a meal is the raw ingredients, not how they are to be cooked and savored.

We have known the laws of mechanics and electromagnetism for a century but still cannot describe the deep dynamics of our own sun, whose conditions determine whether life is possible on planets like ours. Plasma physics, which seeks to understand the interaction of highly energetic matter such as the sun, is in its infancy. Some theorists have seriously proposed that life in the form of plasma beings may be possible. If so, this raises fundamental questions unrelated to Unification theories. The position of life itself in the universe depends on complex interactions, not just basic pieces.

Still, Unification asks questions as deep as one could like. Will matter itself last? (Are diamonds forever?) What happened on the far side of the Big Bang? One suspects the joy of asking may be more lasting and important than the problematic answers.



Gregory Benford is professor of physics at the University of California at Irvine and the author of Timescape.

Through the Jungle of Vietnam Books

by Leonard Liggio

Over the past few decades, much has been written about Vietnam, though many of the books are not particularly helpful in gaining an understanding. Most accounts of the war there illuminate only parts of what went on. Moreover, ideological blinders often cloud analysis. At the other extreme, most neutral scholarly histories of Vietnam, while presenting important facts, lack any framework to make sense of what occurred. All together, however, this welter of books provides ample foundation from which to forge an understanding of Vietnam.

What especially distinguishes the good from the bad among these works is a keen sense of Vietnam's culture and history and of its place in prewar international politics. Three key facts emerge from this history. First, there existed in Vietnam a strong nationalist independence movement that was distinct from the communist independence movement; indeed, the nationalist forces were actually anticommunist. Second, U.S. policy in Vietnam thoroughly misunderstood this distinction. Third, U.S. intervention in Vietnam can ultimately be blamed for the outcome of the war—a communist Vietnam.

Prelude to War

In the several decades before World War II, the Soviet Union, Japan, and China were the three key powers in the Far East. China, the weakest of the three, was the target of the foreign-policy designs of the others, as well as of the United States: the Soviet Union sought a communist China; Japan, faced with stiff tariffs imposed by the United States and Europe, sought a market for its goods; the United States wanted to open China to American exports.

In all this jockeying for power in Asia, Vietnam figured prominently. Two of the most valuable studies of U.S. intervention in World War II, Charles Beard's *President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War* (1948) and Charles Callan Tansill's *Back Door to War* (1952), both indicate the very large number of references to Vietnam in U.S. foreign-policy documents for 1941, the year in which the United States and Japan eventually went to war. Both historians recount how President Roosevelt was using Vietnam's Haiphong harbor to supply China with economic and military aid in its fight against Japan. Trying to force China to negotiate, Japan occupied Haiphong to interdict the American military supplies. When strong procommunist influences in the Roosevelt White House demanded that Japan reopen Haiphong harbor to American military aid, it undercut State Department attempts to reach an agreement with Japan on Southeast Asian issues.

American failure to resolve its conflicts with Japan was to have far-reaching consequences. Japan diverted troops confronting the Soviet Union in Siberia to Southeast Asia. This, in turn, enabled Stalin to move Soviet troops out of the Far East; supplied with massive U.S. economic and military aid, these troops essentially saved Stalin's terror state. Likewise, the U.S.-Japan war that commenced on December 7, 1941, opened the way for communist victories in China, Korea, and Vietnam.

Upon the surrender of Japan at the end of World War II, Chiang Kai-shek's nationalist Chinese army was to occupy northern Vietnam and Britain's Indian army southern Vietnam. The British restored French control in the south, but the Chinese army slowly looted through northern Vietnam. Its slow progress gave communist leader Ho Chi Minh time to consolidate his forces in the north. The U.S. military, which had worked closely with the communists in Southeast Asia during World War II, supported the newly established procommunist government there.

Support of Ho Chi Minh by American intelligence forces has not gone unnoticed in accounts of the Vietnam war. Major Archimedes Patti, a U.S. intelligence officer in Vietnam during this time, offers the most complete treatment in *Why Vietnam?* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980). Patti recounts and defends the U.S. support for Ho Chi Minh against the Chinese, the French, and also the Vietnamese nationalists. He argues, correctly, that had this support continued, we would have had no Vietnam war. But he overlooks another alternative—that the nationalist, rather than communist, independence forces might have prevailed in the absence of U.S. involvement.

Other authors who have noted the U.S. support of Ho include Ellen Hammer in *The Struggle for Indochina* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1954), David Marr in *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial, 1920-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), and John T. McAlister in *Vietnam: The Origins of Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1969). Like Patti, these writers think Ho's eventual victory was inevitable, and they are distinctly unsympathetic to the anticommunist forces. They incorrectly portray the anticommunists as closely tied to the French and later American forces and hence erroneously describe them as opponents of Vietnamese independence.

The Neglected Peasant

Although these historical analyses provide useful information about America's role in Vietnam, none really understands the dynamics of the various nationalist forces nor of Vietnam's peasant society. For this purpose, the best book is Samuel Popkin's *The Rational Peasant: The Political Economy of Rural Society in Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

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Many leftist social historians, keen to find collectivist traditional societies from which they can argue that socialism ought naturally to spring, have created the myth of the "village moral economy," in which the traditional Vietnamese village is portrayed as a sort of large, communal family. Popkin challenges this romantic notion and shows that peasants, including Vietnam's, have traditionally been profit maximizers who pursue individual gain provided state intervention, especially in the form of taxation, does not distort or ruin markets. The tax policies of the French colonial state in the 19th and early 20th centuries caused class stratification in Vietnam and prevented peasants from taking advantage of widening opportunities for free-market agriculture, especially through international trade.

The French had come to Vietnam in the mid-19th century in defense of Christian missionaries under attack from local mandarins, the elite civil service. For this effort, the French demanded and received from the Vietnamese emperor the southern third of Vietnam, Cochinchina (the Mekong Delta). In 1885 the northern and central provinces of Tonkin and Annam were made protectorates of France. While Cochinchina was ruled directly by French colonial officials, Tonkin and Annam were ruled indirectly by the French through the emperor and the local mandarins. Throughout Vietnam, however, taxes levied by the French were extraordinarily heavy compared to other colonies.

Into the mid-20th century, the heavy tax load caused more and more peasants to lose their land or fear its loss. Yet even as the problem became evident in the 1930s, French academic researchers proposed even greater state controls over the traditional village economy. A Vietnamese assistant to those researchers, explains Popkin, "became convinced that drastic change, both economic and political, was needed to improve the lot of the peasantry. His name was Vo Nguyen Giap." In 1940 Giap, a University of Hanoi historian, became the military leader of the communist forces who would defeat first the French and then the Americans in Vietnam.

Giap, and Vietnam's communist revolutionary leader, Ho Chi Minh, were products of northern Vietnam's mandarin culture. Ho's father had been a lower mandarin, teaching in a village school. Early in the 20th century the French had sought with only partial success to abolish the centuries-old village school system taught by mandarins and replace it with a government educational system centralized in the major cities.

Ho's father had been one of the leaders of a private-education movement against the French, and this gave Ho his initial political education before he went to France during World War I. Later, Ho and Giap took advantage of the crisis of the villages caused by French taxation and meddling with traditional institutions, forming the peasants into a base of political support for the Vietminh nationalist movement.

Though none is a good as Popkin's, several other books discuss the Vietnamese peasants in relationship both to French colonial rule and to the Vietnam war. They include Gerald Chaliand's *The Peasants of North Vietnam* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969) and Jean Lacouture's *Vietnam: Between Two Truces* (New York: Random House, 1966), both journalistic in style. Two more scholarly accounts are David Marr's *Vietnamese Anticolonialism: 1885-1925* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971) and John T. McAlister and Paul Mus's *The Vietnamese and Their Revolution* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970).

The work of another academic, Bernard Fall, further complements Popkin's. During the '60s, Fall was the leading academic expert on Vietnam. (He was eventually killed there while doing research.) He was not caught up in the ideological fervor that undergirded the analysis of so many of his contemporaries and, like Popkin, he understood the plight of the Vietnamese peasants. His two key books are *Political and Military Analysis* (New York: Praeger, 1963) and *Vietnam Witness: 1953-1966* (New York: Praeger, 1966).

Deeper and Deeper in Vietnam

The picture that emerges from these works is of a peasant population whose discontent the communists were able to exploit in some areas. After the various nationalist forces initiated a war of independence against the French in 1947, the Vietminh communists were able to win peasant support in the north and central parts of Vietnam. The United States became actively involved in 1950 partly in reaction to a communist victory in China. Communist forces had gained total control in China in October 1949 and in January 1950 sought the Chinese seat at the United Nations. The United States vetoed the move but, not wishing to be isolated, agreed that if France voted against the communists as well, the United States would recognize the French-supported Vietnamese government and provide military support.

Thus, the United States recognized as the government of Vietnam the French-supported Bao Dai, while China recognized Ho Chi Minh. Meanwhile, the Korean war was under way.

One of the ironies of this history is that even as the United States was providing vast amounts of aid to the French in Vietnam, it was also, through the Korean war, lending unintended aid to the Vietnamese communists. For when U.S. army and marine forces were driven from the Yalu boundary of communist China, huge quantities of American weapons fell into Chinese communist hands, subsequently to be turned over to Giap's Vietminh forces. Moreover, heavy support for the French from 1950 to 1954 had the same result: it brought in sophisticated American weaponry that was captured in large quantities by the Vietminh. Well supplied with U.S. arms, they ultimately won the northern half of Vietnam.

At the Geneva Peace Conference on Korea and Vietnam in June-July 1954, Vietnam was thus divided in half. In the complex diplomacy, the negotiators recognized that the Vietminh had won in the north and the anticommunists in the south. At that point, the U.S. government entered Vietnam to replace the French and in 10 years turned an anticommunist victory in the south into the threat of anticommunist defeat that eventually brought 500,000 American troops to Vietnam in an unsuccessful attempt to stave off a defeat.

How did American experts snatch defeat for the anticommunists from the jaws of victory? The role of Democrats, over the better judgment of noninterventionist Republicans, is an important part of the story.

In his last speech before his death in 1953, the great American anti-interventionist Robert Taft implored American policymakers not to involve the United States further in Vietnam. "We are so outnumbered in fighting a land war on the Continent of Asia," he warned, "that it would bring about complete exhaustion even if we were able to win." The strongest defense for America, he argued, was a sound monetary system and a free-market economy based on low taxation. A strong American economy would attract a protective shield of countries who wanted to benefit from close association.

The first Republican administration in 20 years, Eisenhower's, was led by men who shared Taft's views, especially Defense Secretary "Engine Charlie" Wilson and Treasury Secretary George Humphreys. They believed that the best way to protect the United States and its economy was to maintain an inexpensive, well-trained military force that could not intervene abroad. But the Democrats attacked the Eisenhower policy as unheroic.

When there was clamor to send American forces to help the French in Vietnam, the Eisenhower administration backed up its strategic objections with the reality that the army was not designed to interfere in such destructive campaigns. However, with American economic aid dominating the newly created South Vietnam, Democrats took a

strong role in selecting Ngo Dien Diem as South Vietnam's leader. Senators Mike Mansfield, John F. Kennedy, and Hubert Humphrey pressured Washington to support Diem. The State Department, the foreign-aid gang, the CIA, and other "progressive forces" created by the New Deal followed suit.

Anticommunists Ignored

Support for Diem rested on the assumption that his government could effectively oppose the communists. Actually, however, there was hardly a communist left in 1955 when Diem, backed by the CIA, took over South Vietnam—local southern Vietnamese had massacred them.

In the Mekong Delta of southern Vietnam two religious sects, the Hoa Hao and the Cao Dai, had emerged and gained millions of adherents. The Hoa Hao was a reformed Buddhist group, the Cao Dai a synthesis of many different religious concepts. Their adherents tended to be peasant nationalists opposed to the French. Together with the sects' organized militias, the local peasants totally eliminated the communists from Cochinchina. In addition, the Hoa Hao and Cao Dai—along with a third Mekong group, the Binh Xuyen, a syndicate that protected Chinese merchants' rice shipments—helped break dependence on the feudal landlords and channeled peasant resources into the creation of new rural societies. Again, Popkin provides an excellent explanation.

Unfortunately, the Democratic Party and the CIA did not appreciate the pivotal role of these intermediate, nongovernmental institutions in combatting the communists. They read the absence of an American-style social democracy and welfare state as a sign that communism had established a foothold. Especially because the sect militias were not heavily or expensively armed, the American progressives could not believe they could be effective against the communists. Instead, the CIA brought in teams from Michigan State University—the same people who have so dubiously remade American cities for the last generation—to teach public administration and police science.

In 1955, with the support of American military aid and tens of millions of dollars in bribes, Diem destroyed the militias of the Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, and Binh Xuyen, who fled into the marshes as guerrillas. Diem erroneously referred to his peasant opponents as communists and gave them the name *Vietcong*. In *Vietcong Memoir* (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), Truong Nhu Tang (former Vietcong minister of justice), with David Chanoff and Doan Van Toai, explains that "Diem's armed enemies had for the most part only been mauled, not destroyed. Elements of the defeated sect

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armies went underground, licking their wounds and looking for allies. Gradually they began to link up with groups of former (northern communist) Vietminh fighters.... The core of a guerrilla army was already in the making.

The U.S. ambassador to Vietnam at the time, Gen. J. Lawton Collins, recommended replacing Diem for undercutting the major anticommunist forces. The only result was Collins's recall, under Democratic establishment pressure.

Conservative author Hilaire du Berrier provides the best explanation of the role that the United States played in undermining the anticommunist nationalists in Vietnam in the mid-1950s in his *Background to Betrayal: The Tragedy of Vietnam* (Boston: Western Islands, 1965). In *The United States in Vietnam* (New York: Delta, 1967), George McT. Kahin and John W. Lewis corroborate Berrier's description of the nationalist forces fighting Diem as largely noncommunist and understand the role the United States played in destroying them.

In a more recent work, *Intervention: How America Became Involved in Vietnam* (New York: Knopf, 1986), Kahin provides important analysis of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, especially regarding the eventual overthrow of Diem and the sending of U.S. troops in great numbers into Vietnam. Kahin notes that the Vietnamese generals who overthrew Diem in November 1963 saw the Vietcong as "preponderantly noncommunist in membership and heavily dependent upon the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao religious sects, along with other elements that had also rallied to its standard primarily because it had been the only effective channel of opposition to Diem." Indeed, the new government, having overthrown Diem and had him murdered, actually rallied many Hoa Hao and Cao Dai from the Vietcong.

But the Johnson administration did not like the anti-Diem generals' reconciliation policy and engineered a second coup to restore the pro-Diem generals to power in 1966. These generals pressed for American troops to help crush the opposition, and this led to the Gulf of Tonkin Affair, discussed in detail by Joseph C. Goulden in *Truth Is the First Casualty: The Gulf of Tonkin Affair—Illusion and Reality* (New York: Rand-McNally, 1969).

Again, U.S. policy had helped to create the conditions for communist victory. By early 1966 the provisional government of anti-Diem military leaders had been making headway against communists in South Vietnam. When the pro-Diem military faction sought to oust them, local Buddhist communities rose up in their support and seized control of Danang and Hue. After several months, Henry Cabot Lodge, U.S.

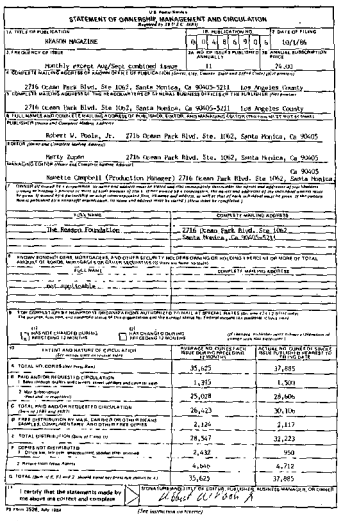
ambassador to Vietnam at the time, had full aid and air transportation provided to the pro-Diem forces in Saigon. A bitter battle, conducted against the recommendations of the U.S. Marine commanders in the area, drove the Buddhist army into the jungle, where it became the nucleus of the Vietcong forces that conquered Danang and Hue during the Tet Offensive of 1968.

One of the reasons for the Vietnamese communists' success was their attention to Ho Chi Minh's injunction not to mention Marxism to the peasants. The communists translated *socialism* into the Vietnamese word that means restoration of traditional village values. Thus the communists looked increasingly attractive as Diem, and then the Americans, destroyed the traditional villages—Diem with "agroville projects" that relocated peasants from their villages to fortified compounds, and the American military with their movements throughout the country.

Despite all the firepower of American weapons, the political destruction created by the American government and its allies left an open field for the communists to exploit. American foreign aid helped destroy the Vietnamese economy; American political and military intervention destroyed Vietnam's social system and its intermediate institutions.

Gradually, a confluence of forces led to the U.S.withdrawal from Vietnam. Again,the role of the Republicans is interesting.

One of the earliest recognitions of the pitfalls of U.S. military intervention came from the Senate Republican Policy Committee. Their report, published in *The War in Vietnam: The Text of the Controversial Republican White Paper* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1967), pointed to the origin of guerrilla conflict in Diem's attack on the villages after 1956 and detailed the escalation of U.S. involvement under Kennedy and Johnson and their rejection of French leader Charles de Gaulle's August 1963 call



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Republican opposition to the Vietnam war was followed by the formation of Business Executives Move for Vietnam Peace. Another factor in the build-up toward withdrawal was a demand by de Gaulle in 1967 that the international monetary system return to a gold standard. This created a major crisis for the Johnson administration, which had been trying to pay for the war by printing money rather than upset the electorate by increasing taxes. Then, early in 1968 the Tet Offensive hastened Johnson's consultation with a council of elder statesmen who insisted that the United States withdraw from the war.

Having destroyed anticommunist forces in Vietnam and sparked major turmoil in the United States, the Johnson administration, and later the Nixon administration, withdrew painfully slowly from Vietnam. The consequences for the South Vietnamese of the communist victory that followed soon after are well documented in such books as *The Vietnamese Gulag*, by Doan Van Toai and David Chanoff (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986) and *Vietnam Under Communism, 1975-1982* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1983), by Nguyen Van Canh. Valuable for their on-the-spot accounts of events in Vietnam following the communist victory, these two books do not, however, shed insight about why that victory occurred.

Indeed, few if any of the many books on Vietnam provide a complete picture of the war. Leftist accounts, while they frequently depict accurately the U.S. role in undermining Vietnam's peasant society, seldom recognize the anticommunist nationalist forces. In contrast, conservative accounts such as John Lukacs's *A New History of the Cold War* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966) and du Berrier's *Background to Betrayal* point to the adverse effects of early U.S. intervention on the anticommunist nationalists. But, except for the Republican Policy Committee report, most conservative analysts defend military intervention in the later years of the war. And only Popkin's excellent book accurately describes Vietnam's peasants.

The definitive anti-interventionist account of Vietnam remains to be written. No one has shown how Vietnam's strong indigenous anticommunist nationalists might have withstood communist insurgency had the United States not destroyed them.

This is not mere speculation. Thailand's experience serves as an important model. The Thai government, without substantial U.S. involvement, was able to completely defeat communist insurgents in the 1970s. As Maurice Tanner showed in an article in REASON in July 1986, the market system rather than military firepower won the conflict. And Charles Murray revealed another aspect of the story in an article in the *Atlantic* in November 1984: after Thailand terminated close relations with the United States, strong indigenous forces held the communists at bay by pursuing a nationalist pro-Thai policy. Clearly, that policy was an anticommunist policy, but it was also at times an anti-American policy in the short run. Today Thailand thrives, in stark contrast to its communist neighbor Vietnam.

Leonard Liggio is a historian and the president of the Institute for Humane Studies at George Mason University.

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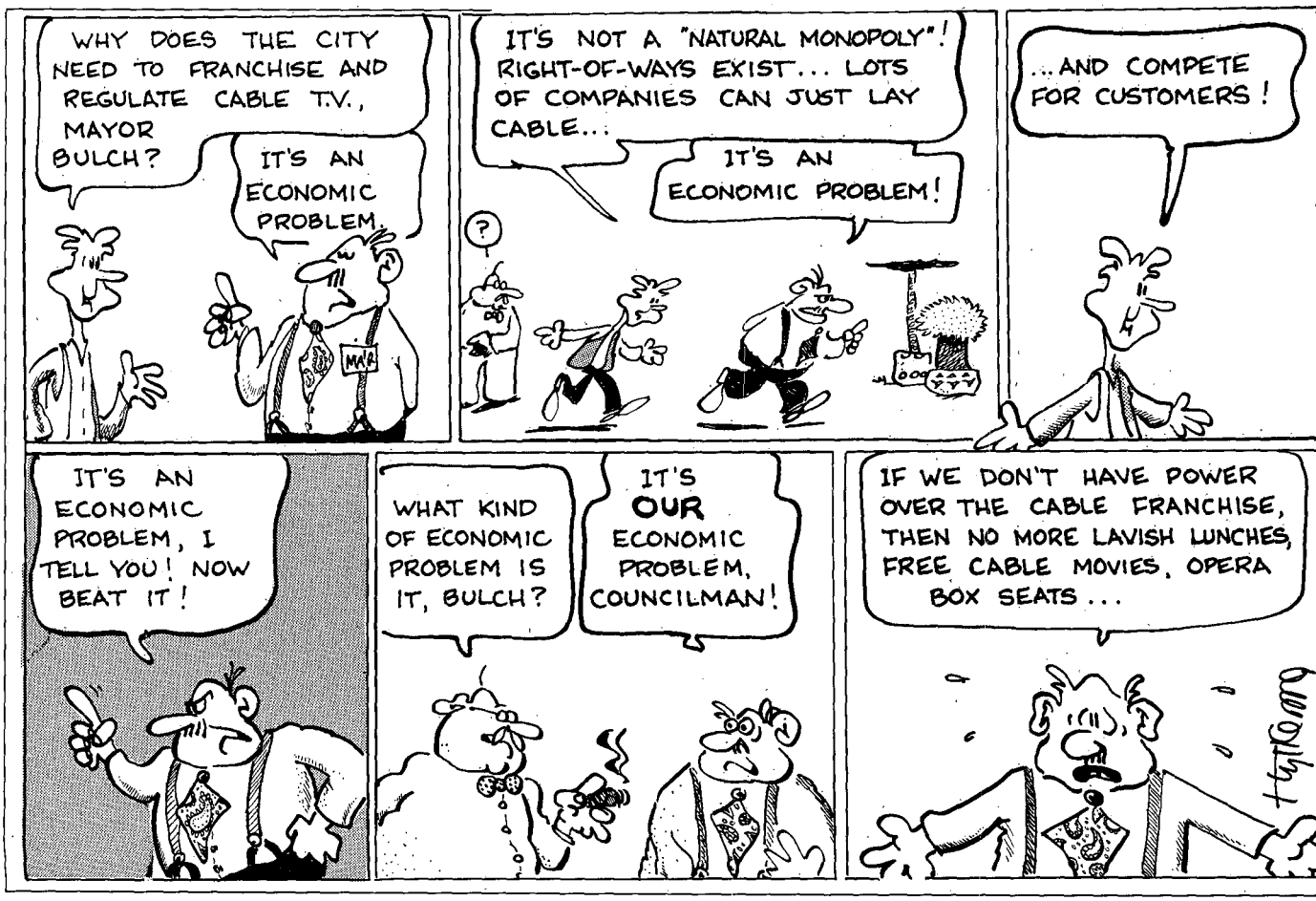
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Lavelle, Samuel	Stock Proceeds	$21,529.61
McDonnell, Martha	Savings	$12,843.78
Meyer, Thusneida	Savings	$18,489.18
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taxes

By Warren M. Salomon

Up from Slavery (Somewhat)

We have a new tax law, and it's serious, folks.

Now, at year-end, it's time to rethink everything. I'm not talking about relatively trivial changes; I'd probably put you to sleep if I wrote about that stuff. You're reading REASON to learn about the big picture, and I won't disappoint you.

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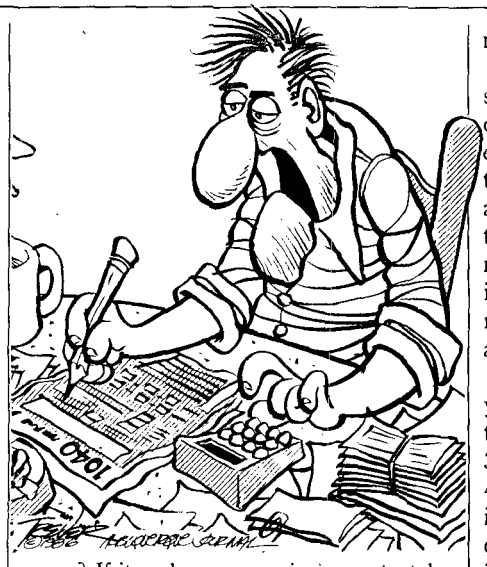
With a maximum tax rate of "only" 28 percent (effective in 1988; it's a bit more complicated in 1987), you can keep 72 percent of everything you earn—and for most people that's really 75 percent or so, because the tax on your first $29.75 K ($17.85 K if you're single) is only 15 percent, and the standard deduction and personal exemptions are going up too. So most of us can think of the new law as a tax cut that lets us keep around 75 percent of what we earn. We haven't had a situation like this since before the New Deal!

With tax rates like that, are you really interested in settling for less now in exchange for a pension later? Why wait? The tax is low enough that you'll want to take it all now, as current income. Obviously, if you work for an outfit that gives everyone a pension, that's fine. Take it. But if you run your own business, the pension plan may no longer make sense. Your earnings are 75 percent tax-free (!), so why bother with all that fine print?

Under the new law, there's nothing wrong with concentrating on earning a high wage. You don't need to divert your energy into setting up clumsy pension plans for your golden years or getting involved in gimmicky deals to get some after-tax income at the end of the year. Just work hard and save. Gods! The old-time virtues may come back.

You've already heard that an individual's capital gains will be taxed just like ordinary income, starting January 1, 1987. Think about that. All your life you, and your parents, have worked to get some of your income as stock options or stockmarket winnings. You sweat it out with your gains in the stock market, worrying about taking an extra market risk while you held on long enough for the gain to be long term. But now—who



cares? If it makes economic sense to take a profit, you'll do it.

And how about those IRAs? If you've lost the deduction for your annual contribution, it's not the end of the world. Not quite. The income earned on the money you put away is still tax free. But consider this: without the deduction, what you're left with isn't much better than a mutual fund that invests in municipal bonds, and a mutual fund is a lot easier to work with and to withdraw from. Sure, municipals earn a point or so less than you're probably getting in your IRA, but really, is the IRA that big a deal any more? It's tempting to regain control of your own money.

Speaking of municipal bonds: starting with your 1987 return you'll have to report your tax-exempt interest. Some of you (I imagine) have a lot of unreported loot in the form of municipal bonds, so start thinking how you'll get yourself out of this one. You've been warned.

The next couple of items are boring but important. The accounting rules are changing too. Most corporations grossing over $5 million are now prohibited from using the cash method of accounting. No more rolling income into the next year by means of prepaid expenses or delayed billing.

Partnerships, S corporations, and personal service corporations (PAs) are going to have to be on a calendar year. So if you have a fancy fiscal-year PA for your medical practice, the income you've been deferring will have to be picked up and taxed over the next four years.

Been deducting interest on your personal returns? Forget it now, unless it's on a first or second home mortgage—and even then (generally) it's deductible only if the debt doesn't exceed the purchase price and improvements. Phasing in for 1987-90, the deduction for interest on your investment debt is limited to your investment income. Sorry about that, but if your investments make economic sense, you won't be affected.

Been operating as a corporation to keep your tax bracket down? Time to rethink that one too. The top corporate bracket is 34 percent starting mid-1987 (down from 46 percent in 1986). Obviously, 34 percent is far higher than the top individual bracket of 28 percent. You'll save money by *not* incorporating. Entrepreneurs can save money and simplify their lives by operating as sole proprietorships, S corporations, or partnerships.

Want to *un*incorporate? It used to be that you could liquidate a corporation and there'd be just one tax—on the stockholders' capital gain. But for corporate liquidations completed after the end of this year, the *corporation* will be taxed as if it had sold its assets, and the stockholders will still be taxed on their individual gains. This double taxation is really bad news, but there's a relief provision for closely held small companies (worth less than $5 million) that liquidate before January 1, 1989. So it's not too late to start switching things around.

And speaking of tax rates, everyone's been grumbling about the loss of business tax breaks: no more investment tax credits, and longer depreciation schedules. Sure, some outfits are going to get slammed. But the 34 percent top rate on corporations makes the United States a tax haven compared to most industrial countries. That means we're going to be awash in foreign investment, which means more jobs, more production, more of everything.

Overall, is the new law good or bad? Well, all I know is that things are going to be really different from now on, and probably lots better.

Happy new year.

Warren Salomon is an attorney and tax specialist practicing in Miami.

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Robert Chappell is a self-made success story. He has founded and served as president of two insurance companies and is a recognized expert in legal tax avoidance. Mr. Chappell has resided in many foreign tax haven jurisdictions, is well versed in tax law, and has been the successor in many battles with the I.R.S. He possesses an unusual knowledge of tax matters, from both practical experience and training.

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By John Dentinger

D.C. Roto-Rooter

When he was a high-school student in Arizona, Peter J. Ferrara once brought a Republican in to debate a Democrat in front of his fellow students. To Ferrara's dismay, the two politicians shared basically the same views.

Ever since, Ferrara has been trying to shake up the Republican Party, mainly by advocating free-market approaches to policy issues. Early in the Reagan administration he became a leading spokesman for enterprise zones from his post in the department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Now an attorney in Washington, D.C., he is one of the principal proponents of turning Social Security into a voluntary system.

"You've got to have some people who are going to get into the guts of the system to make changes, to joust with all the bureaucratic forces," says Ferrara, who sees himself as one of those jousters.

As a Harvard student—he entered with advanced standing as a sophomore in 1973—Ferrara got an early taste of how to infiltrate a left-wing bureaucracy. The *Harvard Crimson*, the well-known campus newspaper, then saw itself as Marxist. Ferrara, by contrast, belonged to the Harvard Republican Club and was founder and president of the Student Libertarian Association.

By writing politically acceptable consumer articles tearing apart the Harvard Coop (a huge, co-op bookstore), he convinced *Crimson* staffers to elect him to their executive board. Once on the board, Ferrara was able to print what he wanted: articles on the energy crisis, reverse discrimination, busing, and gun control, and a series attacking Cesar Chavez as a fraud. "The reaction was apoplectic: 'Why are we letting this person publish these things? He doesn't understand the proper principles of the revolution,' " Ferrara recalls.

In 1981, after graduating from Harvard Law School and practicing corporate litigation in New York City, Ferrara moved to Washington to work for HUD, leading a policy development team on enterprise zones. He soon found himself on a collision course with the urban-planning bureaucracy.

The bureaucrats wanted to use enterprise zones to create hothouses with government loans to small businesses and federal grants to state and local governments to build infrastructure. Ferrara pushed for a fresh-air approach: tax cuts, deregulation, privatization, and neighborhood volunteer groups to deal with social problems.

Peter J. Ferrara: *"You've got to have some people who get into the guts of the system to make changes."*

"They made objections at meetings," says Ferrara. "I ignored what they had to say and proceeded, so it was kicked upstairs." Upstairs, his ideas won the support of Ronald Reagan. Backed by the president, a bill based on Ferrara's proposal passed the Senate, but Democrats in the House kept it bottled up in committee. He hopes it will be revived in 1988, noting that "Republicans always like enterprise zones during election years."

(Enterprise zones provided a personal payoff for Ferrara in 1983, when he met his future wife, Consuela, at a lecture he gave on the subject at George Washington University.)

To objections that enterprise zones distort the economy, Ferrara responds, "The idea was to create these demonstrations, these little Hong Kongs around the country. Suppose Harlem seceded from the country and established a free market—would people say that distorted the market? It's a matter of taking political boundaries too seriously."

Ferrara also hasn't taken too seriously the political boundary that fences off the Social Security system from attack. In 1977, while he was a law student, Congress enacted the largest peacetime tax boost in U.S. history to bail the system out "until the early 21st century"—which turned out to be 1983, the time of the next bailout.

Observing this stopgap approach, Ferrara saw an opportunity for real reform. Social Security, he thought, was an interesting issue because "the proper approach was never discussed. Other areas had been masticated by so many people, but this had been the domain of Social Security bureaucrats. Here there was room for innovation and new analysis."

The program that was gravy for the first recipients now promises to be little more than grill scrapings for today's young, who may well pay in more in taxes than they receive in benefits. In this bleak prospect lies the key to Ferrara's reform—a private retirement account dubbed the Super IRA.

Taxpayers could partially or totally opt out of Social Security, getting a 100 percent income-tax credit for Super IRA contributions up to some limit. To fund the diminishing number who choose to remain in the program, Social Security taxes would have to continue. But, with some dollars put into productive private investment instead of Uncle Sam's magic hat, young taxpayers would be better off.

A bill that would apply this approach to the Medicare portion of Social Security has gained 40 cosponsors in the House of Representatives, including several Democrats. "We're trying to get the Reagan administration to pay attention, which is always a problem," says Ferrara. "It's a long-term battle, but it's necessary if there's ever going to be any long-term reduction in government spending."

Ferrara backs winners—his favorite sports teams are the Los Angeles Raiders and New York Yankees—and he is confident that Social Security reform is more popular than politicians recognize. "Polls show that the elderly are concerned about the legacy they're leaving their children," he says. His proposal even earned hearty applause during a debate before the American Association of Retired Persons.

Another sign of increased respect: the Social Security bureaucracy usually refuses to dignify criticism with an answer. "Now," says Ferrara, "they're yelling and screaming and pounding on the table, which I take as a pretty good sign."

John Dentinger is a free-lance writer in Los Angeles.

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viewpoint

By Douglas B. Rasmussen

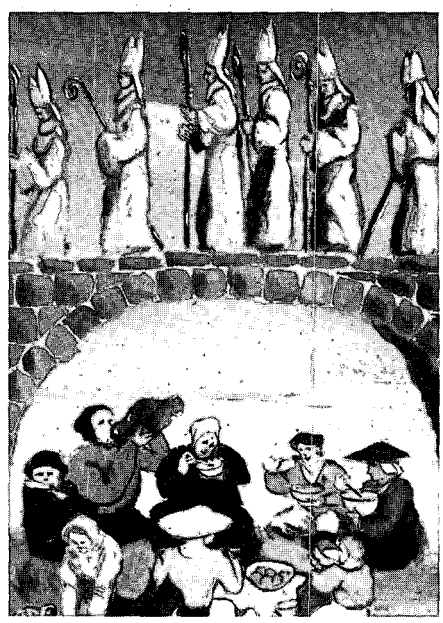
The Bishops vs. the Bourgeoisie

Creedal politics is a very dangerous thing. The most exaggerated example of this in the world today is Iran. In this country, it is the Moral Majority. Yet, with their recent pastoral letter on the economy, adopted in its final form in November, the United States Catholic bishops become contenders for the crown.

Using all the moral authority they can command, the Catholic bishops proclaim in "Economic Justice for All" that every man, woman, and child in the world has the right to life, food, clothing, shelter, rest, medical care, education, employment, healthful working conditions, and fair wages. Theirs is not just the obvious point that these things are beneficial to people and they ought to be allowed to pursue them. No, the bishops call these "economic rights," defined as "empowerments that call for positive action by individuals and society at large." In other words, these rights are entitlements that the citizens of the country are morally obliged to fulfill and that ought to be legally enforceable. "Governments may levy the taxes necessary to meet these responsibilities, and citizens have the moral obligation to pay those taxes."

The Catholic bishops thus call for nothing less than a moral and social revolution. They do not seek merely to change how individuals choose to conduct their private lives. Rather, they seek to determine, through public policy, how they *will* lead their lives. The bishops urge a "new American experiment" to change the principles by which this nation has defined the proper role of government.

Nor are the goods and services that these "economic rights" demand from others to be provided "merely out of superfluous goods." Unless a condition of absolute scarcity exists, every person in need has a moral claim on the time and resources of those who have more than the minimum necessary for life. Since no absolute scarcity exists in the United States, the bishops would have the resources of every citizen reduced to the minimum level necessary for life if that is what is required to make sure others—everyone else in the world—have sufficient resources to meet their basic needs. (Forget about that VCR, or even an ice cream cone, as long children are starving in Ethiopia.) "The fulfillment of the basic needs



MICHAEL KNEPP

of the poor is the highest priority."

The Catholic bishops are supremely confident of the righteousness of their cause. They believe that "economic rights" are grounded in human dignity. "The dignity of the human person, realized in community with others, is the criterion against which all aspects of economic life must be measured." Though they admit that there can be disagreement regarding the best means to attain their moral priorities, they unctuously pronounce that "there can be no legitimate disagreement on the basic moral objectives." The arrogance of this statement is matched only by the offensive character of the moral viewpoint that supports it.

As many conservative and neoconservative critics have noted, the Catholic bishops' understanding of what wealth is and how it is created is hopelessly flawed. A far more fundamental error, however, lies in their understanding of human dignity. These so-called moral authorities, who command the respect of millions, talk a good line about human dignity but base their view of it on a conception of human flourishing that fails to accord primacy to human autonomy, or self-directedness. It is thus precisely their moral objective—the attempt to *engineer* human flourishing—that is wide open to challenge.

The picture of human flourishing that the Catholic bishops portray is that of a hungry mouth being fed. Flourishing results from what one receives. In fact, human flourishing requires that people conduct their lives according to their own reason and judgment. These are not just *means* to flourishing, like food and shelter—this the bishops would acknowledge. They are instead the central feature; without reason and judgment, *no* action could be virtuous.

Before ever addressing questions of what someone should think or how someone should act, an analysis of human flourishing shows that human beings ought to live their lives according to their own judgments. People ought to be self-directed or autonomous not because they will thus invariably flourish. Indeed, we can all think of examples from our own lives where we have thought through something, acted on our own best judgment, and pursued values in ways that were not conducive to our well-being. The important point is, though, that these activities, as central, necessary features of human flourishing, are right activities in themselves.

But this the Catholic bishops ignore. They ignore that human flourishing is fundamentally a *self*-directed activity. They ignore that human dignity results from the fact that humans are moral agents whose purpose is to choose the actions that will allow them to flourish. By championing "economic rights" the bishops promote a political order which denies that individual human beings are potential ends-in-themselves who cannot *be* ends-in-themselves save through their own self-initiated and self-maintained action.

The Catholic bishops advocate a political order in which the exercise of our judgments about how to use our time and resources—how to live our lives—is not to be legally protected but is to be sacrificed on the altar of providing for the needs of others. The picture of human dignity that the Catholic bishops ultimately portray is, like their picture of human flourishing, an offensive caricature. Yet, in the case of human dignity it is something much worse. As George Orwell has written, "Imagine a boot stamping on a human face."

Douglas B. Rasmussen is an associate professor of philosophy at St. John's University and coauthor of The Catholic Bishops and the Economy: A Debate *(Social Philosophy & Policy Center, Bowling Green State University).*

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Low Cost Solution

"Look north. Old Canadian silver dollars, each containing 0.6 oz. of silver are selling for under $10 each," writes investment advisor Adrian Day in *Investment Monthly*. "The pre-1967 dollars are big, heavy, real silver – honest-to-goodness money – whose value is not subject to investor fads and fancies."

It's easy to see the logic in what Mr Day writes. At present the most common U.S. silver dollars are selling for about $30 each in rolls of 20 coins. And other common dates sell for as much as $85 each in quantity. Yet at less than $10 per coin, Canadian silver dollars offer greater rarity at a lower price.

The chart below compares current prices of the most common U.S. silver dollars with the Canadian silver dollar:

Item	Date	Mintage	Price
U.S. Silver Dollar, Morgan type	1921	44,690,000	$35.00
U.S. Silver Dollar, Peace type	1923	51,737,000	29.75
Canadian Silver Dollar	1965	10,786,596	7.90

As you can see, the Canadian silver dollar sells for about 75% less than the U.S. silver dollar – despite the fact that the Canadian silver dollar has a far lower mintage. You can buy a "mini-roll" of ten Canadian silver dollars for about the same price as two of the commonest Morgan silver dollars minted!

For the past two months, Liberty Coin Service has been quietly acquiring Canadian silver dollars. Our buyers have bought conservatively and quietly, with careful attention to quality.

Thanks to our careful buying, we have been able to accumulate a reasonably large quantity at remarkably low prices. LCS' price is less than $8 per coin even in lots as small as a ten coin "mini-roll." We invite you to compare our prices and quality!

Act Quickly! The silver market has been very active recently. Our offer is limited to our current inventory, and we have no way of knowing what it will cost us to replace the coins we offer here. Orders will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Because we offer Canadian silver dollars at such a remarkably low price, there is a good chance our entire inventory will be sold out!

To Reserve Your Purchase call us **Toll-Free** at 1-800-321-1542. (Michigan and Alaska residents call 1-517-351-4720.) Or return the coupon below.

Liberty Coin Service has served investors with lowest prices and immediate shipment of precious metals since 1971.
You can call Liberty Coin Service toll-free at (800) 321-1542 for quotations on any rare coin or precious metals item, or for an introductory packet of information.
Liberty Coin Service 300 Frandor Ave Lansing, MI 48912

Yes! Please send me the Brilliant Uncirculated Canada Silver Dollars, Pre-1967, I have indicated below:

Qty

_____ "Mini-Roll" of 10 coins @ $ 79.50 = _____

_____ Rolls of 20 coins @ $ 158.00 = _____

_____ Bags of 500 coins @ $3925.00 = _____

Postage and handling: $5.00

Total Enclosed: _____

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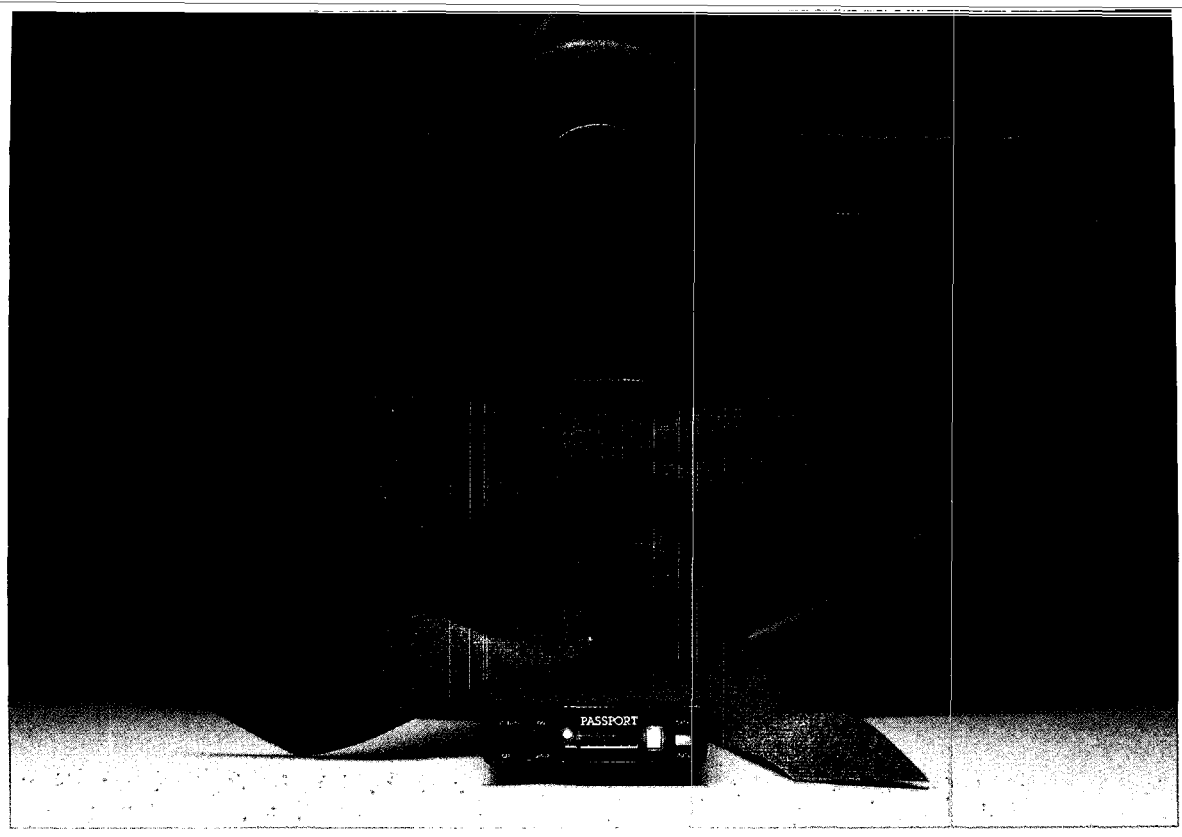


Pure Joy

(And we'll deliver...tomorrow morning)*

Imagine a superbly crafted electronic instrument, powerful enough to protect against traffic radar, miniaturized enough to slip into a shirt pocket, beautiful enough to win an international design award—and advanced enough, thanks to its new Rashid-rejection circuitry, to obsolete the detectors of every other maker.

Then imagine finding one with your name on it.

Pure Joy is a PASSPORT of your very own

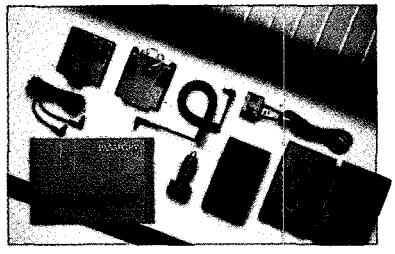
PASSPORT has exactly what the discerning driver needs, superheterodyne performance and complete Rashid rejection. On duty, it maintains a remarkably low profile, only 0.75 inch tall. It's about the size of a cassette tape.

This miniaturization is possible only with SMDs (Surface Mounted Devices), micro-electronics common in satellites but unprecedented in radar detectors. The result is Pure Joy.

Others may put it differently. "In a word, the PASSPORT is a winner," said the experts at *Car and Driver.* "The PASSPORT is recommended," said *Road & Track.*

The package in which PASSPORT arrives is as impressive as its performance. Everything is included: visor clip, windshield mount, straight cord, coiled cord—even a leather case. Each item is secured in its own foam-padded compartment to assure safe arrival. Rather like traveling first class, we think. And this will be the impression when the box is opened.

Installing PASSPORT is as easy as the unwrapping. Just clip to visor or windshield, plug into the lighter, and PASSPORT is on duty.



PASSPORT comes complete with all accessories.

Pure Joy is also our commitment to you. If PASSPORT doesn't live up to your highest hopes—for any reason—within 30 days, just send it back. We'll refund all of your money and your return shipping costs. No exceptions. No hidden charges. Just a straightforward commitment.

Pure Joy is the gift you'll save till last

One more PASSPORT advantage. It's available exclusively from us—and we deliver. No parking hassles. No crowded stores. No waiting in lines. Just call us toll-free. We'll pay for UPS shipment and a gift box is available at no extra charge. Orders in by 3:00 pm eastern time Monday through Friday go out the same day.

* Federal Express guarantees overnight delivery for only $10 extra. So you can have your PASSPORT tomorrow morning if you choose.

With shopping this easy, giving PASSPORT is a pleasure. But the best part is still that special moment when the package is opened...Pure Joy.

$295 (OH res. add $16.23 tax)
Slightly higher in Canada

VISA MasterCard Diners Club International

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RADAR·RECEIVER

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG

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